

# IT IS RIGHT TO REBEL

Edited by Michael Hyde





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# **IT IS RIGHT TO REBEL**

**Edited by Michael Hyde**

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'Marxism consists of thousands of truths, but they all boil down to one sentence, "it is right to rebel"! For thousands of years, it has been said that it was right to oppress, it was right to exploit and it was wrong to rebel. This old verdict was only reversed with the appearance of Marxism. . . . And from this truth there follows resistance, struggle, the fight for socialism.'

MAO TSE TUNG

'The streets of our country are in turmoil; the universities are filled with students rioting and rebelling; communists are seeking to destroy our country . . . we need law and order . . . yes . . . without law and order the republic will fall. Elect us and we shall restore law and order.'

ADOLF HITLER, Hamburg, 1932.

# FOREWORD

This book was written by students involved in the conflicts at Monash University over the past five years. It is the history of politically important struggles. But unlike most other 'histories' it has not been written by the sensationalist press, by stale academics or by vested political or administrative demagogues. It has been written instead by the students themselves. Most impressions of Monash University are probably based on newspaper, radio and television reports. You will find a very different viewpoint expressed in these articles. The techniques of press manipulation of public opinion are very subtle and radical views are usually only promulgated in leaflets and speeches. Press distortion is carried out by the handful of monopolies who control the media and have a vested interest in maintaining the capitalist system. Anyone who rebels against the Establishment is attacked by these press barons, be they students, Women's Liberationists, S.E.C. workers, postal workers, water-side workers, builder's labourers, or whatever. Newspaper editors ridicule and denigrate students as rat-bags 'wasting taxpayer's money', in an attempt to divide radical students from the rest of the community. However radical students are rebelling against the same enemies, the same injustices, the same repression as are other sections of the community and they are beginning to unite with other militants despite these press attacks.

Conflicts exist at Monash fundamentally because students are progressive and concerned about important social and political issues such as the war in Indo-China, racism and imperialism, whereas the University administration is conservative and reactionary, concerned only with the

distribution of millions of dollars of tax-payers' money in order to 'educate' students to serve the exploiting minority in society. Students radicalized by the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam and by their experience in fighting against this and other injustices are beginning to reject capitalism. They do not want to be trained as obedient servants of the status-quo, the 'brains of capitalism'. University administrations have acted to crush this student rebellion, and the sharpest conflicts have occurred over the 'disciplining' of left-wing students. It is from these conflicts with the administration at Monash that students have come to analyse the role of the university in society. They have concluded that it exists to perpetuate a class society in which the vast majority of the population is exploited by a wealthy minority. Many students now take the stand that their struggles are struggles in common with those of the working class against exploitation. The history of the Monash students' struggle is one of increasing support for the radicals while the administration is supported by a dwindling minority.

This, then, is our side of the story. We make no pretence that it is an 'objective' account. There can be no objective account in this, for as in all histories which are about politics there are different vantage points. But we have written an honest account and we have given our interpretation and recording of events and feelings.

Our book is the product of work by many different authors and editors as well as many others who assisted with typing and research and in other ways. Some chapters were written jointly and others separately. In some places, differences have been compromised in order to produce a consensus account. In other cases, the diverse approaches of the authors can be seen in the way that different chapters have been written differently. None of the authors accept all the interpretations and analyses that are included in this book.

Nor would we expect the reader to do so. Perhaps an 'authoritative' account of events at Monash will have to wait until after the revolution, when a clearer perspective can be gained, and when not only can some details of internal wrangling among the left that have been left out, be revealed, but also the records of internal argumentation within the University Administration will be available for public inspection.

In the meantime, this book represents a first attempt in Australia to describe student struggles, in a way that allows the lessons of those struggles to be summed up and used to carry the movement forward.

There is one common theme on which all the authors, despite any disagreements, agree. It runs through the whole book because it runs through the whole struggle at Monash and indeed elsewhere in Australia and the world:

We assert that it is right to rebel, that it is right to struggle for a better society; for a socialist society.

M.D.H., 1972.





# BEGINNINGS

To understand the radicalization of Monash University and the role played by the Labor Club in the late sixties, and early seventies one has to go back in time even before the establishment of Monash. Labor Clubs were formed at the major Australian Universities in the 1920s. Their period of greatest activism and influence was in the post-war period, when Melbourne and Sydney Labor Clubs were led by Communist Party members. The Universities were reflecting the world-wide upsurge of militancy in the working-class in the first few years after the war. Then capitalism reacted to the spread of revolution in Asia and working-class militancy in the West, and began the 'Cold War'. This too had its reflection in the University. In both Melbourne and Sydney, the Labor Clubs were split and A.L.P. Clubs were established. These A.L.P. Clubs had rules barring Communists from memberships and at the beginning were under the supervision of the State Labor Parties. At Melbourne from the middle fifties onwards, Cold War conditions were aggravated by the presence of Dr. Knopfelmacher, a Psychology lecturer, Czechoslovakian ex-Communist and Cold Warrior par excellence.

By 1961, under the influence of the American Civil Rights campaigns, the academic liberalism encouraged by the Kennedy regime in America which found an echo in Australian academia, and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (C.N.D.) in England, a tame form of activism had returned to the Universities. The Melbourne A.L.P. Club fought a small campaign against the White Australia Policy, placing it in a pre-eminent position in Victorian Student politics. The Melbourne Labor Club was intimidated by Dr.

Knopfelmacher's witch-hunting in the early sixties, while the more activist A.L.P. Club was at odds with the Left-wing State A.L.P. Leadership. The influence of Knopfelmacher and his D.L.P. oriented student following grew from 1961 till the A.L.P. Club split in 1964.

It was the Melbourne A.L.P. Club that helped establish the Monash Labor Club and moulded it in its own Whitlamite image. Up until the beginning of 1968, more than a year after the Monash Labor Club had opted for a revolutionary position, it still carried a clause in its Constitution, inserted by its right-wing founders, barring members of 'parties other than the A.L.P.', i.e. Communists, from Labor Club membership. In 1962, the Secretary of the Labor Club sent letters inviting guest speakers which carefully assured them that the Labor Club had nothing in common with the Melbourne Labor Club, but rather 'identified with the Melbourne A.L.P. Club'. Throughout the period of 1961-65, the leadership of the Monash Labor Club was strongly in support of the right-wing opposition inside the Victorian A.L.P. working fairly closely with the Fabian Society.

In the pre-Vietnam period, the only real period of student activism was in 1963 when a student anti-hanging committee, much stronger at Melbourne than at Monash, mobilized strong opposition to the proposed execution of Tait. Otherwise the main activities of student political clubs were meetings with speakers and conferences, and, at other Universities, faction-fighting. In 1964, the Melbourne A.L.P. Club was split between 'Groupers' and Fabians, and at Sydney the A.L.P. Club was split into Trotskyites and Fabians. Many of the splits took place at the annual conference of the Australian Student Labor Federation in 1964. Judging by comments made by Monash Labor Club leaders some twelve months later, the concept of political factions fighting over

political theory bewildered the parliamentary-oriented comrades at Monash.

Monash itself was characterized by a youthful, carefree atmosphere. Students were free of the stifling traditions of older universities and the small size of the student population enabled ideas to be disseminated readily, rather than swallowed by a massive bureaucracy. The best known 'radical' was not even a member of the Labor Club. Pete Steedman, whose reputation for radicalism was based on some attacks he made on the League of Rights and his individual eccentricities of speech and dress, was active on the Students Representative Council (S.R.C.) and he edited *Lot's Wife* in 1965-66. Although his own politics were middle-class nihilist, he did play a significant role in the radicalization at Monash, possibly in spite of himself. As editor of *Lot's Wife* he published a considerable amount of material, often from overseas sources, critical of the Vietnam War and presenting progressive views on historical issues such as the Spanish Civil War. His newspaper drew a concerted attack from the D.L.P. inside Monash and the Knopfelmacher push outside, and the resultant controversies Created the closest thing Monash had yet seen to a political atmosphere.

The attacks on Steedman were linked to attacks from the same sources on the *Monash Soviet*. These were aimed at so-called left-wing academics. The D.L.P. claimed that a secret conspiracy which they called the *Monash Soviet* was spreading subversive ideas among the students and, to a large extent, running the place. According to the National Civic Council, Politics Professor Rufus Davis was running a department full of Communists, who were brainwashing students. The attacks were based on fairly moderate criticism made by staff members about the Vietnam War, and the admission of Rex Mortimer (then a member of the



Communist Party of Australia) to post-graduate studies. Max Teichman was singled out for special attack. Several years later, the Labor Club was attacking Davis, with much better documentation, for discriminating against left-wing students. He was also criticized for not appointing Mortimer to an academic staff position. Teichman earned the enmity of the Labor Club for his hostile role during the period when the Labor Club was giving aid to the National Liberation Front (N.L.F.). The *Monash Soviet* incident was important since, because of it, the D.L.P. could not raise opposition to self-professed communists during the late sixties. Students remembered their witch-hunting against pale liberals in the middle sixties and would no longer rally to their cries against the Communists.

The most significant factor in student politics during the sixties was the response to American and Australian aggression in Vietnam. Before the Australian involvement in Vietnam, Students' Representative Councils were debating grounds for careerists, but after the War began, the careerists were under constant challenge. Before the War, left-wing student organizations were either A.L.P. cheer squads (Monash, Adelaide and Canberra) or forums for factional squabbles (Melbourne and Sydney). In either case, they had no influence on the apathetic majority of the student body. But during the period of the War, the political consciousness of large groups of students changed significantly, in Australia and America because of the active involvement of these countries in the War, and in Western European countries because of the blatant U.S. - . aggression in Vietnam.

The direct involvement of Australian students in the War by conscription shook many of them from the complacency of post-war affluence and forced them to think and question the reasons for the War. From this position, they went on to

examine the nature of the society that was responsible for that War and some students began to see the need to rebel and moved beyond that towards an understanding of the necessity for working-class politics.

In May 1965, one month after the Australian invasion of Vietnam, the Australian Student Labor Federation held the first anti-Vietnam demonstration at which students were arrested; three of the sixteen arrested came from Monash. The same A.S.L.F. Conference passed a motion of conditional support for the National Liberation Front (N.L.F.) of South Vietnam. Three Monash students voted for it, two of whom became President and Secretary of the Club the following year. The evening after the motion was passed, A.L.P. leader Calwell cancelled an appointment to address the Conference. The motion was successfully rescinded with supporters abstaining from the second vote, but the question of support for the N.L.F. had now been posed to the Monash student left. The debate on the N.L.F. saw the beginning of a polarization inside Monash Labor Club. Even though some members of the Labor Club were developing and even though they supported the N.L.F., they were still Left-Social Democrats, and identified with the Cairns wing of the A.L.P. and the Victorian Central Executive, rather than taking a revolutionary position.

The majority of the Club was still Whitlamite right-wing. They were also involved in the Vietnam issue and sponsored a series of addresses by speakers against the War, all liberal in tone, which were later published as a pamphlet. The Labor Club helped to initiate a number of valuable teach-ins on Vietnam and members on the S.R.C. moved a policy that called for all troops (including the Vietnamese!) to withdraw from Vietnam. It took three years and a change of student government system to change Monash official policy to support the N.L.F.

In 1966, the Labor Club passed into the hands of Cairnsite leftists. The new president David Nadel and his comrades were elected on a policy of activism, and in the context of the Vietnam War this was to lead inevitably to a rejection of the Social Democratic politics. They were not at that time seen as a threat to the basic direction of the Club, and it was actually a Fabian that nominated the president!

The new leadership put out a broadsheet *Left Hook*, the forerunner of *Print*, which offended the Social Democrat Whitlamites both in form and content. Other members of the Right opposed the new Committee's attempt to hold regular general meetings of the Club to decide official policy. They believed that while the Committee met regularly and implemented policy, the Club as a whole should not have a policy. The policy general meetings, like the broadsheet, did not fully get off the ground till the beginning of 1967 and the campaign against the Bolte degree. However later fully functioning general meetings played a major role in involving and radicalizing the membership (over 300 in 1968) of the Labor Club.

Meanwhile the Labor Club members continued to play a role on the S.R.C. which began organizing protest sales of the pamphlet *American Atrocities in Vietnam* (which the Vice Squad had attempted to ban) and a motorcade against conscription. On the last day of first term 1966, President Johnson arrived in Melbourne, and the S.R.C., working with the Labor Club, organized a large (in those days) Monash contingent to the demonstration. The Johnson demonstration was marked by extreme and unexpected police violence. The unprovoked police attack on the crowd posed the question of State Power to the Social Democratic (pro-A.L.P.) members of the Labor Club in a way that could not be ignored. The S.R.C. sponsored a pamphlet full of statutory declarations listing incidences of the police attack.

Hard on the heels of the Johnson demonstration came the Federal elections in which the Labor Club leadership was involved, both as A.L.P. members and more significantly, as part of the Youth Campaign Against Conscription. Many of them believed that Labor was certain to win because of their withdrawal policy on Vietnam and its anti-conscription policy. Labor's failure led to a profound despair about parliamentary politics and a (fairly superficial) rejection of Social Democracy. It was not till the experiences of the Aid to the N.L.F. Campaign that Labor Club members began to develop political understanding that justified their previous more emotional rejection of reformism and the A.L.P.

During the vacation (1966/67) the Labor Club continued a Vietnam-orientated off-campus involvement, constituting the majority of the organizers of the demonstration against Nguyen Ky, then principal U.S. puppet in Vietnam. Straight after the Anti-Ky demonstration, a national Anti-War Activist Conference was held in Sydney, attended by a large number of Monash Activists.

The experience of the Johnson and Ky demonstrations and the Federal election of 1966 had catalysed the radicalization of many Monash students who, prior to these events, were only just beginning to question the nature of Australian society and its part in the Vietnam War. These demonstrations were seen by the government as the beginnings of a U.S.-style student revolt. University administrations, mindful of the Berkeley (California) student revolt early in 1965, and moved possibly by a desire to 'protect' themselves, considered off-campus discipline. Berkeley had not influenced students' consciousness until 1967 when Monash started to be called 'Australia's Berkeley'. To attend a demonstration in those days was a courageous act. Nowadays it is an accepted right and a regular occurrence.



The Labor Club set up a headquarters where several prominent activists lived. There, plans for 1967 were discussed. From the Johnson demonstration till the beginning of term in 1967, the Labor Club activists went through a period of intense re-examination of their previous political stance. With two exceptions, the leaders had entered Monash after 1965. The exceptions were former members of the Melbourne Labor Club and the Sydney A.L.P. Club. Some of these activists were later to move to a Maoist position, and all emerged at the beginning of term with a revolutionary socialist activist perspective.

# NO PEDIGREE FOR PIGS

'On 1st December, 1966, the University wrote to the Premier, inviting him to accept an honorary degree; the letter of acceptance was dated December 6. Ryan was sentenced on 12th December and he was hanged on 3rd February, 1967.'

*Sound* (Official broadsheet of Monash University, 8th February, 1971).

It was the matter of Premier Bolte's honorary degree that first raised the question of the relationship between the State and the University in the minds of the students of Monash — or at least raised it for the first time with special vividness. Feeling against the award was strong — not only because of its amazingly ill-conceived timing, (anti-Bolte sentiments can hardly have been higher than at the time of Ryan's hanging) but because of the plainly nervous fashion in which the administration went about its bestowal. Vice-Chancellor Matheson, foreseeing student and staff opposition, treated the business with ponderous secrecy. In a private interview with the Editors of *Lot's Wife*, he explained that Sir Henry was sensitive and might penalize Monash if there was a lot of trouble surrounding his award. At no stage did he threaten the Editors, but rather he appealed to their 'loyalty to the University', a tactic he has since used on countless student officials.

Opposition to the 'Bolte degree' was led by the Labor Club — the first protest it had led as an independent body. Dr. Matheson has recently dated the beginning of student unrest at Monash from the publication of *Print* — the Labor Club's broadsheet — in Orientation week of 1967. Perhaps

he was thinking particularly of the second issue of *Print* (9th March, 1967) which tore apart his carefully tailored cloak of secrecy with a report on the background to the degree decision. It is reprinted below (with the omission of a short paragraph about pressure put on the Dean of Arts which was subsequently proven inaccurate):

## THE BOLTE DEGREE

Ever since December last year rumours that the Premier of Victoria was to be granted an honorary degree by Monash University have been circulating on the campus.

Information that has come to hand within the last two weeks has by now changed these stories from unsubstantiated rumours into more reliable information. Due to the cloud of secrecy with which the University cloaks its affairs the full details are not yet known, but that which has leaked out looks very nasty indeed.

It's said that most of the action took place at a recent meeting of the Professorial Board. *Print's* informants say that when the Vice-Chancellor arrived at the Professorial Board meeting he asked that standing orders be suspended and that no minutes be taken during the suspension. He then went on to tell the Board that honorary degrees would be given to Sir Henry Bolte, Dame Mabel Brooks, and the Chairman of the S.E.C.

In the debate that followed a number of Professors spoke heatedly against the granting of the Bolte degree, but it seemed that the majority of the Board were prepared to go along with the whole distasteful business so long as it meant that University funds would not be cut off.

Until Professor Andrew, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, spoke. In a blistering attack on Sir Henry Bolte he said

that Victoria was becoming a Police State, and refused to associate the Faculty of Medicine with an honorary degree for the Premier. The Dean of every other Faculty then followed suit by refusing to grant the honorary degree in their particular Faculty.

The above, of course, has been hearsay, and the only documentary evidence to date is a significant omission from the minutes of a meeting of the University Council last November. The minutes are divided into two sections headed "Business" and "Action" and each paragraph is numbered, so that a paragraph in the Business section has the same number as the corresponding number in the Action section. In the November minutes there is a paragraph number in the Business section with no motion recorded alongside it. Yet in the Action section the same number has "Vice-Chancellor and Academic Registrar" alongside it. Apparently the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Registrar are to put a blank space into effect! Unless what should be in a blank space is a motion that Sir Henry Bolte, Dame Mabel Brooks and the Chairman of the S.E.C. be given honorary degrees.

Picking up the story from the Professorial Board meeting again the Deans' rebellion had left the Vice-Chancellor in an awkward position. But there was still a way out. The University Council may grant an honorary Doctor of Letters without reference to any of the Faculties. But this is only done when there is no time to go through the full procedure, and to give Bolte one of these degrees would be an insult.

The news that all graduation ceremonies have been postponed from April to some time in the May vacation would seem to indicate that the Vice-Chancellor has won



out against the Deans, and that Bolte will be given an honorary degree then. The vacation is traditionally a time for raising fees in Australian universities, because there are no students about then. It's tempting to see the postponement of the graduation ceremonies as being motivated by similar considerations.'

*Print* then went on to speculate on the reasons for giving Sir Henry the troublesome degree:

`Indeed Matheson is known to be frightened of what staff and students might do if and when they find out about the Bolte degree. That's why he's gone to considerable lengths to keep the whole matter a secret.

At first glance one can sympathize with Matheson's position. He doesn't want to give an honorary degree to a man like Bolte. Nor probably do most of those who comprise the Honorary Degrees Committee. But Bolte is going to get one and the obvious inference is that Bolte has blackmailed the degree out of the University by letting it be known that if he doesn't get it next year's funds may be cut even further. So Matheson is deeply offended by Bolte's high-handed conduct and he says to himself "I should put the good of the University before my own personal feelings. If I don't give in, Monash will suffer financially."

So reluctantly he sells his soul to the hangman.

Unfortunately he is doing more than that. He's selling our souls to the hangman too, and that's why, in the final analysis, you can't sympathize with the Vice-Chancellor.'

A month or two later it became obvious that Sir Henry wasn't blackmailing the University, and a much more

distasteful rumour, with considerable circumstantial evidence to support it, came to light. *Print* reported the colourful rumour that two senior University office-holders, one of whom was inebriated, the other extremely ambitious, offered Bolte an honorary degree at a party. University officers felt they could not withdraw the offer because of the embarrassment a withdrawal would cause. Hence the unanimity on the Honorary Degrees Committee and the Council, though apparently the Professorial Board is not so easily co-opted. *Print* then summed up:

`The most valuable thing about a University is not the Library, or the lecture rooms, but the spirit of independence and free enquiry that exists, to some extent at least, in most Australian Universities.

The basic question in this case is not whether or not a man as bad as Bolte should be allowed to blackmail the University to gratify his own personal vanity or for any other reason.

Men like Bolte have too much power over the University as it is, without men like Matheson selling the University out even further.

If Matheson is allowed to sell out, Monash will become a fine tertiary training institution, but will cease to be a University.'

The publication of this article created an immediate furor at Monash. Three Deans, Professors Andrew, Cochrane and Selby-Smith, immediately denied the story, as did Matheson. Matheson accepted invitations to address the Student's Representative Council and the Staff Association. But when he appeared before these bodies, he simply read a prepared statement and refused to answer questions. Dr. Matheson

also summoned the Editor of *Print* and the President of the Labor Club to appear before him; during the interview he threatened them with discipline for publishing libellous material. Not wishing to appear biased against the Left, he also delivered a similar threat against the Editor of *Free Speech*, the D.L.P. Club publication. Finally Dr. Matheson repeated this threat in a letter to *Lot's Wife*: this letter triggered the debate on censorship that has persisted in the background of every student issue since.

'DEAR SIR,—The second edition, 1967, of the above broadsheet included the statement that "it would appear that pressure has been brought to bear on the editors of *Print* to desist from comment . . ."

What actually happened was that I saw Messrs. Cassidy and Nadel, in the presence of Mr. Falk, and told them if they published statements that might be construed by the Court as libellous, if an action was brought, they might render themselves liable to be brought before the University's Disciplinary Committee on a charge of misconduct.

I have now seen Mr. Bailey in the presence of Mr. John Price, and have said much the same to him. I took particular care to try to explain to him that I am not trying to prevent controversy or discussion about the University's affairs but that I am very concerned about the manner in which controversy is being conducted at present.

The purpose of both these interviews was to give these gentlemen warning that in promoting their views — which they are quite entitled to hold — they might have exceeded the bounds of fair comment and have indulged in offensive and possibly libellous comment on

members of the University, and that any repetition of this sort of thing, by any student. might lead to disciplinary processes.

It has fortunately not so far been necessary to make much use of the power of the Discipline Committee and consequently the word "misconduct", which appears in the Statute, has not been defined by a body of case law. However, there seems every reason to expect that the Committee would start from the assumption that actions which outside the University might lead to conviction in a Court could within the University fall within the definitions of misconduct. Among such actions the publishing of libellous or defamatory statements about members of staff must be included.

At successive Orientation Weeks I have told our new students that we intend to treat them like adults and it would therefore be inconsistent, as well as a complete negation of what the University is trying to do, for me to object if students develop a lively interest in University and public affairs and express their views with vigour. I have no such intention. What I do now say is that among the responsibilities which adulthood brings is that of standing up to the consequences of one's actions in a way that is not expected of a child. And that if students overstep the bounds of propriety in their controversies then they must be prepared to face the consequences.

Yours faithfully,

J. A. L. Matheson,

Vice-Chancellor.'

Meanwhile the S.R.C., unable to decide whether to demonstrate against the Bolte degree or not, ran a survey to

gauge student opinion. 68% of those questioned opposed the degree, but 51% did not feel that it was the S.R.C.'s role to organize a demonstration. Professor Cochrane, Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Politics, would not allow a member of the S.R.C. to collect completed survey forms after his lecture.

Consequently the S.R.C. decided against holding a demonstration, but the Labor Club, working through its Anti-Bolte Sub-Committee, undertook to organize one instead. Badges demanding 'No Degree for Hangman' were sold out almost immediately, though a slogan produced by some anonymous Labor Club members had a more lasting effect. 'No Pedigree for Pigs', written in fertilizer on the forum lawn, was visible from the top of the Humanities Building (Ming Wing) for three months!

In an attempt to forestall the demonstration, Dr. Matheson arranged another interview with the President of the S.R.C. in which he warned that police might be called on campus to protect Sir Henry. As the threat was not made to the organizers it did not have the desired intimidatory effect. Then he hit on a much more effective way of forestalling the demonstration. He changed the venue of the ceremony from Monash to the Melbourne Town Hall, and arranged for the ceremony to fall during the vacation. Dr. Matheson explained that the Alexander Theatre, which has been used for graduation ceremonies ever since, was too small to hold all the graduates.

The Labor Club countered this move by saying that the demonstration was not against Sir Henry accepting the degree, but Council offering it: the demonstration could still be held on campus, during term. On 12th May, the last academic day before the Graduation Ceremony, in a packed lecture theatre the Labor Club awarded a degree to Sir

Henry Pig, a piglet which showed its great displeasure by defecating on the rostrum. The Pig then led off three hundred demonstrators to the Council Room. where the relationship of the University to the State was discussed.

Sir Henry (the Premier, that is) was awarded his degree a week later. As a gesture of disapproval, most graduates refused to applaud. The Administration did not take disciplinary action against the students or the pig for entering the Council Room, perhaps in the hope that criticism of the University's subservience to the Government would die down.

In fact it had only begun.

# AIDING THE ENEMY

The affair of the Bolte degree was the first conflict between students and administration over the place of the State in university affairs.

But it was the 1967 campaign to send aid to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam that first earned Monash its reputation for student radicalism. Initiated by the Labor Club, the decision to collect aid funds sparked off a major storm which led to such events as a special act of the Commonwealth Parliament 'For the Protection of the Defence Force in respect of its Operations in or near Vietnam', a proclamation directed against the Club by the Commonwealth Governor-General in Council, and (of all things) a breach of diplomatic relations between Australia and Cambodia.

All this profoundly influenced the future development of both the anti-war movement and the student movement in Australia and in fact much of what happened later at Monash can only be understood within the context of the N.L.F. Aid Campaign. Although it was basically a Labor Club affair involving only a small minority of the student population (the 'tiny minority' cliché was actually valid in this case — for the last time), the repercussions are still being felt. Recognizing its importance Dr. Matheson, in a public debate in 1970, said that 'the first act of actual confrontation with the authorities at Monash was when the students collected aid for the Viet Gong {sic}'.

Because Dr. Matheson and his colleagues did regard the collection of aid for the N.L.F. as a 'Confrontation' with their authority, and actually 'disciplined' students for collecting



medical aid, what was originally an 'extremist' action sponsored by a section of the anti-war movement who happened also to be Monash students became a University 'issue'. As a result, Monash students were shaken out of their apathy and for the first time some began to see the Vice-Chancellor as an 'enemy' a threat to their democratic rights and a representative of ruling class interests.

The Labor Club now gained credibility as a serious and committed group prepared to take personal risks in support of what it stood for. Many recognized it had something important to say about the war in Vietnam and the nature of the University, and **Print**, the Labor Club organ, became the main source of campus news and opinion for most students at that time.

And just as interesting as the effect of the N.L.F. Aid Campaign on the general climate of the anti-war movement as a whole was its transformation of the Labor Club itself. Originally a group of rather naive and inexperienced young students with vague leanings towards revolutionary socialism but strong illusions about the nature of society and the University's place within it, the Labor Club was suddenly hurled into the middle of the sharpest political struggle in which any section of the student movement had yet been engaged. Those who stayed with it throughout all the twists and turns and despite intense pressures, emerged with a skill and toughness previously lacking in 'student politics'. Having faced the prospect of up to two years in gaol and expulsion from the University, the Labor Club activists were left with fewer illusions about the nature of the University and the State, and a serious commitment to revolutionary politics. Their first-hand experience of repression impressed on them the need to organize in a serious and disciplined way with the aim of building a mass movement.

The fact that the A.L.P. (including Dr. Cairns and the 'left') joined with the Government and the D.L.P. to make the Labor Club's activities a criminal offence helped bring about the final breach between the club and social democracy — Labor Club supporters left the A.L.P. and social democrats left the Labor Club. The University's intervention in the campaign and the use of its disciplinary powers against the Club was the starting point for the protracted struggle between the left and the University authorities that followed, as well as raising the question of 'discipline' as an issue at Monash for the first time. The first student general meeting on political issues was held during the N.L.F. campaign, undermining the influence of the reactionary S.R.C. and paving the way for the establishment of the more representative participatory democracy system of the 'Monash Association of Students' in the following year.

## **FIRST SUPPORT FOR THE N.L.F.**

Expressions of solidarity with the N.L.F. began to be heard in the anti-war movement very early in the piece — mainly from elements regarded as 'left-wing extremist' at the time. This caused a reaction from the right-wing leadership of the anti-war movement (including the Communist Party of Australia) so that the carrying of N.L.F. flags was banned at the demonstrations against South Vietnamese Premier Ky's visit to Australia in 1967. (The ban was ineffective, although some left-wingers in the Monash Labor Club supported it because they felt that the flags 'might alienate the masses'.) By mid-1967 a substantial number of the younger militant anti-war activists had arrived at a position of supporting the N.L.F. Perhaps the best summary of this developing consciousness and the history of what happened later is contained in *Which Way Treason?* — a broadsheet published by the Monash N.L.F. Aid Committee:

For a long time. the Monash Labor Club, in common with the other University Labor Clubs, has opposed the Vietnam war. We felt that the United States was guilty of aggression and that Australia should not join with them in sending troops to intervene in a civil war. Together with many sections of the community we fought hard against commitments to the Vietnam war and the sending of conscripts. But we failed and the war still goes on and conscripts are still getting killed.

Gradually we came to realize that it was no use simply condemning the war and demanding that it stopped. We were logically forced to move from denouncing the United States as an aggressor to supporting the victims of aggression —the Vietnamese people led by the National Liberation Front. For a long time we have been distributing literature which showed that the war was not "aggression from the North" and that the "Viet-Cong" were an indigenous southern Vietnamese nationalist movement whose main aims were social justice. land reform and an end to foreign domination. We had been pointing out to people that the Americans were the aggressors who had sent half a million troops to occupy another country and who were engaged in indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population. After saying this sort of thing for some time we were led to acknowledge our actual support for the National Liberation Front. Support for the N.L.F. has been the policy of the Monash Labor Club (and of the Australian Student Labour Federation which represents Labor Clubs at all Australian Universities) for a considerable time now but no concrete action was taken to implement it. The Sydney University A.L.P. Club did establish a fund for medical aid to North Vietnam and the N.L.F. more than' a year ago. This has been largely ignored since.

Accordingly we decided that the best way to make our opposition to the war felt was to declare our full support for the National Liberation Front and to prove that we meant it by collecting funds for them. This was put before a series of five general meetings of the Labor Club with attendances between 50 and 80 and it was finally decided on Friday, 21st July, after a total of seven hours discussion that the club would sponsor an autonomous committee for Aid to the N.L.F. which would have two funds—the main one for direct financial aid to the N.L.F. (the "unspecified" fund) and a second one for medical aid to civilians in N.L.F. controlled areas.'

It is interesting to note that in those days 50 to 100 Labor Club members was regarded as a large meeting and it required lengthy and intensive debate just to convince the Labor Club of the need to support the N.L.F. By 1970 a student general meeting had adopted support for the N.L.F. and collection of funds for it as official policy of the Monash Association of Students.

## **THE REACTION BEGINS**

The decision to collect aid was taken on a Friday and by the following Monday the press scare campaign was on. Public reaction was whipped up in the most blatant way over the next few days — 'Government must stop Cong aid' cried the R.S.L.; 'the decision does not reflect the feeling of the average Labor Club member' (right-wing Labor Club members); 'in particularly poor taste . . . whether it be right or wrong, we are fighting in Vietnam, and presumably fighting the N.L.F.' (Monash Liberal Club); '(The Communists may be puzzled to realize how much toleration is shown here to the curious sideline activities of minorities in our universities' *The Herald* Editorial); '. . . Brings aid and comfort to the forces of aggression in Vietnam . . . will

prolong the war and increase suffering . . . (students involved) unworthy of their citizenship' (the Minister for Defence, Mr. Fairhall); 'send them to Vietnam or send them to jail' (the State Council of the Liberal Party); left-wing staff to blame . . . an act of open treachery' (the Monash D.L.P. Club); 'the overwhelming majority of students at Monash deplore the proposed scheme' (the S.R.C. President); 'most untypical of student attitudes to Vietnam' (World University Service); and last but not least, the Vice-Chancellor's office at Monash announced: 'There is very strong feeling against this among students and staff. It is terrible for the University to be associated with it.'

An hysterical atmosphere was created within the University as well as outside and there were several incidents ' of physical violence against Labor Club members. The press openly incited this with gleeful reports such as the following:

'More than 25 students went to the student's administration offices and threatend to throw members of the Labor Club into an ornamental pool . . . They said later: "We are just as ashamed of them as people outside the University and we will do anything to stop them, including violence" . . .

"We think their action is treason and should be treated as such . . . Australians have supported the Government's commitment to the war and we want it known that it is only a ratbag minority going against it".' (*The Herald* Tuesday, 25th July.)

'Groups of students at Melbourne and Monash yesterday acted strongly against the proposed committee to aid the N.L.F. in South Vietnam' . . . 'Soon after Mr. Price left the (Admin) building he was surrounded by about 50 students — many from the medical faculty—who yelled

out "commie" and pelted him with flour bombs. One student who wore swastika signs on his jumper with "Third Reich" printed on it yelled "You coward Price, you're just a bloody commie" '. (Age. Thursday, 27th July.)

Faced with a situation in which 'violent incidents' were taking place at Monash and the right to 'academic freedom' was being threatened, the Administration acted promptly to restore order by threatening disciplinary action against those responsible. Setting a pattern which has become familiar, Admin's action was not to discipline those right-wing students engaged in physical violence and disruption, but to endorse their activities by banning Labor Club activities. The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Andrew, issued a directive on 27th July that no collections were to be allowed on campus, except for medical aid through a London Doctor's Committee that he nominated. Professor Andrew also made a donation towards the medical aid fund so as to mitigate the severity of his ban. While obviously a conscience-salving gesture, this fact was to assume importance later when three students were disciplined for exactly the same 'offence'. No steps were taken by Admin then or later, to put a stop to the right-wing thuggery that was being promoted by the D.L.P. Club. So much for their concern over 'violence'.

During the first week of hysteria, the D.L.P. Club, with the support of the S.R.C. and Admin took the opportunity to convene the first political general meeting of students ever held at Monash. This was reported in the *Sun* of Thursday, 27th July:

'More than 1000 students are expected to attend a meeting at Monash University today to discuss the University Labor Club's decision to raise funds for the

National Liberation Front in Vietnam . . . The students will be asked to vote on this resolution:

"We the students of Monash University meeting here today, wish to disassociate ourselves from the Labor Club for the ill-repute they have brought on both the students of Monash University and the University itself, by offering material aid to the N.L.F."

"Irrespective of the question of the commitment of Australian troops to Vietnam, the troops themselves, many of them National Servicemen, deserve the full material support of the Australian people." '

In fact, when this meeting of 'More than 1000' students actually took place the resolution favoured by the sub-editors of *The Sun* was rejected and resolutions supporting the Labor Club's right to collect any aid and opposing the University's ban on collections were adopted instead. Needless to say no further mention of this meeting was heard in the press, not even in *The Sun* which originally promoted it. One can also date the opposition to the principle of student general meetings on the part of Admin and the D.L.P. Club from this event.

*Print* of Monday, 31st July, commented:

'Prior to the meeting, Labor Club members who supported the establishment of a fund to aid the National Liberation Front, had taken the abuse, the letters written on toilet paper and the flour bombs as representative of the reaction of the majority of students, and thought themselves totally isolated from the general student body.

The meeting on Thursday, however, refuted this in no uncertain terms. Not only was the initial motion



defeated but the students of Monash University decided in addition to take a positive stand on the issue. They asserted the "right of every Australian to hold and express his own opinion regardless of the prevailing official and public attitudes of the day" and "supported most strongly the Labor Club's right to any political views" and "opposed any restriction of use of University facilities to any University club", and they called on the S.R.C. "to institute civil and criminal proceedings against any person or persons who, in their opinion have assaulted any person within the University because of the opinions they express". Finally, the meeting declared that it "opposes the war and urges the Australian government to do all in its power to seek a peaceful solution to the war by recognising the N.L.F. as a legitimate party to negotiations."

In addition to the support for our civil liberties, a most interesting development has been the general shift to the left of University opinion. Instead of our extreme position causing a reaction to the right as some people expected it has allowed people to remain moderates while adopting a much harder line. Thus, people who were previously saying "well of course I don't agree really with the war but we can't pull out now" are now saying "I'm opposed to the war but I couldn't possibly support the N.L.F." or even "I don't object to medical aid to the N.L.F. because they are in the right but I don't agree with providing military aid while our troops are fighting." It is very interesting to note that the student meeting did not dissociate itself from the medical section of the fund.

One of the best developments has been the resolution that the meeting opposes the Vietnam war. We have been trying to get the S.R.C. to carry a moderate motion

opposing the war or at least to take the matter to a general meeting of students for some time. We never succeeded because the S.R.C. felt that most students did not clearly oppose the war (they were probably right).

We believe that we achieved this result by taking a positive and clear-cut stand and that if we compromise on our stand now it can only do damage.'

This last sentence was aimed at the Labor Club meeting to be held that day at which, in accordance with another suggestion from *The Sun*, 'student leaders' were going to move that the N.L.F. Aid proposal be 'thrown out'.

Prior to the meeting a massive campaign had been organized among more moderate Labor Club members to 'save the Club' and the result was a turn-out of more than 150 (as was pointed out later, this represented more people than the combined membership of all the anti-Labor political clubs at Monash put together and was a larger meeting than the last annual general meeting of students called by the S.R.C.). Although violent incidents had ceased after the student meeting condemning them (and only then: students had to take action themselves since Admin did nothing), press attacks on the Labor Club continued unabated. 'Left-liberal' staff members joined in the attack (instead of rallying to a defence of democratic rights) with statements such as the following from a Max Teichman, a senior lecturer in Politics who had been outspoken against the Vietnam war: 'If you are ready to arm people to kill your own conscripts, you should be prepared to kill them yourselves'. This comment was given headlines in *The Herald* on the Friday before the Labor Club meeting. Despite all this, the Club held firm and voted 90 to 30 against dropping the aid plan.

By the end of the week special branch police were crawling around the University questioning people, and had broken into students' homes at 6.20 a.m. to 'interview' them. The Deputy Commissioner announced that police 'would not hesitate to prosecute students if sufficient evidence was found against them'.

Because the Labor Club, had been busy replying to internal and external attacks, they did not actually begin collections of medical aid on campus until the first week in August. In accordance with Professor Andrew's directive, collections for non-medical aid were not taken on campus, although many donations were received for the non-medical fund through the mail. At that time it appeared as though most of the hysteria had died down although hate mail such as the following the Club President Martha Campbell received was still coming in:

'Dear Mrs. Martha, (Slut)

You should be rooted and burnt. Sluts like you should be locked up. If ever I see you at Monash or anywhere for that matter I will personally cut your bloody throat, you wouldn't even make a good whore for the Abbo's. Our blokes are being killed overseas while you, you harlot are sending the Viet-Cong money. I write to you on shit paper to a bit of shit.

Yours truly,

Aussie.

P.S. I know you so watch out.'

## **GOVERNMENT and UNIVERSITY ACTION**

On Tuesday, 8th August, *Lot's Wife*, the Monash Student newspaper, editorialized that '. . . the N.L.F. aid scheme is likely to become commonplace (albeit contentious) on the Monash campus, and through many sections of the community as well'. This was (in the short term) quite wrong. On 2nd August the National Civic Council (N.C.C.) paper *Newsweekly* published by B. A. Santamaria characterized the aid as 'treachery' and commented that 'The prescribed penalty is life imprisonment'. The paper said that Monash had a reputation as a 'treason factory' and went on:

'The reputation may not be entirely undeserved. There is more real, successful subversion going on, per head and per square foot of floor space (sic!) on the Monash campus than anywhere in Australia.'

*Newsweekly* (whose views are faithfully relayed at Monash by the N.C.C. sponsored broadsheet *Free Speech*) went on to refer to 'the astonishing resemblance of some of the University's own courses to straight-out Communist propaganda'. It is interesting to note that since this incredible 'faux pas' the D.L.P. Club has given up distributing *Newsweekly* at Monash although that paper continues to carry regular 'reports' of Monash events, and *Free Speech*, with the same white-on-black letterhead supplied by the N.C.C. to its fronts at all Victorian Universities (and interstate) continues to appear regularly. (See *Liberty* at Latrobe, *Radical* at Melbourne etc. — all identical in style.)

By Tuesday, 15th August, the press had hit on a new tactic and reports with headings such as 'Diggers fighting mad on V.C. aid' began to appear. Apparently 'News of the Club's move had just reached Nui Dat, where news-papers tend to be a week old' and within a few hours the Australian public was being informed by A.A.P., that National

Servicemen were making such pithy remarks as: 'If any of these Labor Club people get in my way there will be some bloody noses, believe me' and that 'What's wrong with the Government that they don't step in and stop this crowd?' was a 'typical comment'. *The Herald* reported that the Army had told returned soldiers not to comment and then quoted a Private Alf Gottschberg as saying 'The Government should conscript all these ratbags and send them up to Vietnam . . . Perhaps after they have experienced a few of their sneaky bombs they might think a second time before wanting to help them.'

On the same day the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Roden Cutler, V.C., told the R.S.L. that Monash students 'had gone too far'. He said 'the R.S.L. must oppose any group which, knowingly or not, would tend to assist any Communist-inspired or Communist-based theory, object or activity.'

By Wednesday, 15th August, Senator McManus of the D.L.P. had publicly called for students to be charged with treason under the Crimes Act (this carries the death penalty) and Sir Henry Bolte CDC Bolte) had announced that he was very worried 'that the money of Victorian taxpayers is being used to support these students who want to help the Viet-Cong'.

A D.L.P. urgency motion supported by the Government was moved in the Senate to call for legal action. After a full debate, the Government and the D.L.P. combined to defeat their own motion. The same day however, Prime Minister Holt announced to a cheering House of Representatives that 'we will do everything within our power to prevent any material aid being conveyed to the Communist National Liberation Front'. He said: 'There is undoubtedly in Australia today, a, campaign of psychological warfare 28 directed against the Government's policies in Vietnam. I am seeking

information on the various aspects of this campaign and I wish to see how these activities phase in with any organized campaign of this kind'. Holt's red-baiting attack was given front page headlines in the *Age*, *Sun* and *Herald* (17th August) and it became clear that the Government was planning to introduce special legislation against aid collections rather than risk having full scale 'treason trials' under the Crimes Act.

Up to now the University had not been involved directly in the controversy, as the Labor Club had deliberately decided not to challenge the ban on non-medical aid despite opposition to the ban from a student meeting. While referring to 'Monash students', the newspapers and all other Government and reactionary spokesman always 'made it clear' that 'only a tiny ratbag minority were involved'. The Labor Club had deliberately established its Aid Committee as an autonomous non-University body in order to avoid any confusion over University involvement. Into this situation stepped Dr. Matheson. Fresh from a trip to New Guinea, he arrived in Australia on Friday, 18th August, and issued a statement three days later that he did not plan to discipline students for raising money for the N.L.F. He was quoted as saying: 'Students have just as much right to their political views as anyone else' while adding that they should not give the impression of speaking for the University as a whole. Meanwhile, collections for medical aid were continuing normally at Monash.

Two days later, Dr. Matheson 'clarified' this statement in the *Australian* (23rd August) by pointing out that collection for 'any combatant or political group of the N.L.F.' has already been banned and that disregard of this instruction 'could bring the offender within the scope of the University's discipline statute'. A special meeting of the Victorian Cabinet was held (21st August) which called for reports on

the aid collections from the Vice-Chancellors of Melbourne and Monash Universities. Dr. Matheson dutifully sent in a 'report' although he has denied having any other communications with Bolte on the matter (a Monash student, Alf Dowsley, stated that Dr. Matheson had mentioned contacts with Bolte to him in conversation. but this claim was denied by the Vice-Chancellor). Although the threat of intervention against students on scholarships and against the general funds of Universities which 'harbour' rebels was not followed up on this occasion, it has been repeated since and seems likely to crop up again. (In the United States, legislation depriving 'convicted demonstrators' of scholarships has been introduced and the same has been proposed in Australia by the R.S.L. In Japan there is even a law dissolving (i.e. disbanding) any University which has been declared by the Minister of Education to be suffering from 'student disturbances' and which has not brought the situation to an end after twelve months).

On the same day as Dr. Matheson's statement in the *Australian* (23rd August), the *Sun* devoted its front page to an article under the heading 'GOVT. RUSHING BILL TO STOP CONG MONEY'. The article revealed that as well as drafting legislation, the Government had, through the Reserve Bank, issued a directive instructing all banks to hold up any transfers which could be intended for the 'Viet Cong'. It was also announced that the Australian Red Cross Society had refused gifts earmarked for the N.L.F. and returned the money. Both of these steps had been anticipated by the Aid Committee which had taken precautions the previous week by sending the first \$500 of direct financial aid to the N.L.F. representatives in Cambodia and the first \$100 of medical aid (collected at Monash) to the London Doctors' Committee to be forwarded as medical supplies. The announcement by the Red Cross is important because both the Government



and the Vice-Chancellor were later to claim that their prohibitions did not make medical aid illegal because aid through the Red Cross was still permitted.

During this week the press stepped up its hate campaign again with reports from 'disgusted' troops and cartoons suggesting that Army veterans might like to bash up a few students.

## **THE TIDE TURNS**

Details of proposed legislation called the 'Defence Force Protection Bill' were announced on Monday, 30th August. The Bill made it an offence punishable by up to two years 30 imprisonment and/or a fine of up to \$2000 to send aid to the Government of North Vietnam, the Communist Party of North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, 'a body of persons or person assisting the Government of North Vietnam or one of the bodies mentioned previously or opposed or likely to be opposed to any part of the Defence Force in operations in or near Vietnam, or the armed forces of the Government of North Vietnam or of any other body mentioned', and last but not least, 'persons engaged in guerrilla activities under the direction or in the interests of the Government of North Vietnam' or of the bodies previously mentioned. Since there is in fact no such country as North Vietnam, the Bill specified that the 'Government of North Vietnam' meant 'the government of the country known as the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" '. (The reference to 'in or near Vietnam' as early as 1967 is interesting. The Act would now extend to cover aid to the Laotians and Cambodians.)

Although aid was only being collected for the N.L.F. in South Vietnam there are constant references to the 'Government of North Vietnam' and the 'Communist Party of North Vietnam'

(specified to mean the 'Dang Lao Dong Vietnam' which translates into English as 'Vietnam Workers' Party' rather than 'Communist Party of North Vietnam'). This was because the Government was still trying to maintain the myth of 'aggression from the North'. Newspapers consistently referred to the N.L.F. as 'the political arm of the Vietcong' or in headlines as simply 'Hanoi'.

Indeed until the Aid campaign, the existence of the N.L.F. was hardly even mentioned in the papers despite the fact that it was an alternative Government administering two thirds of South Vietnam and providing the only effective Government services such as education, health and postal services in the areas under its control (and in fact the most effective ones in all South Vietnam). It is only since the Aid campaign that references to 'Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces . . .' have appeared, and the letters N.L.F. have been seen occasionally. (Although newspaper readers would still be unaware that the N.L.F. apparatus includes village primary schools, county high schools, University teacher training colleges, that it publishes 40 provincial newspapers and has diplomatic relations with some forty other Governments . . .)

The Bill also covered collecting or soliciting aid and donating to a collection. A special section made it an offence to 'incite, urge, aid, or encourage' a breach of the other sections. This was punishable by up to six months gaol, imposed summarily by a magistrate without the opportunity for trial by jury. It was explained that this would be used to get the sinister 'behind the scenes' Communist manipulators who were *really* responsible for the student activities. A great deal of right-wing comment on the issue concerned these 'hidden manipulators', the D.L.P. was especially fascinated by them although it never managed to unearth one.

We reprint below excerpts from the *Age* of 30th August, describing the Attorney-General's speech on introducing the Bill:

'Mr. Bowen said that in 1965, after Australia had sent forces to Vietnam, groups were organised within Australia "to express opposition to the use of our troops in that area". "The Government has watched the progress of those groups," he said. "For a long time it appeared that they were keeping within the freedoms guaranteed to all Australians by our laws and were not *attempting to turn from words to action.*" (Our emphasis—Ed).

"(The Liberal Party's win in the Federal elections) resulted in a quietening, for some time, of even the most vocal of the small obstructionist groups," Mr. Bowen said.

"However, last month came the announcement from the Labor Club at Monash University that funds would be solicited to send to the so-called National Liberation Front of South Vietnam."

"The handful who supported this motion could hardly have hoped for the wide spread of publicity which they gained".

"The Government has no desire to stifle free discussion. The right to dissent is one which we value highly." (It is "highly valuable" in *"watching the progress of these groups"*— Ed).

"Not only have the students *passed beyond the point of discussion and dissent*, but people of more advanced years have now stepped onto the stage to encourage active assistance to the N.L.F.," he said.

"In the result the Government has decided to deal with the situation by specific legislation" ' (i.e. to prevent people turning "from words to action" by the threat of gaol—Ed).

## **DR. MATHESON RESPONDS**

Bowen's sentiments about the illegality of passing 'beyond the point of discussion and dissent' have since been echoed many times by Dr. Matheson in relation to sit-ins. On this occasion the good Doctor's response was to immediately announce a 'Defence Force Protection Act' of his own, even before the Bill had become law. On the same day that the details of the Bill were announced, its provisions were echoed in the following directive from the Vice-Chancellor:

'No university faculty may be used, nor may any collection be solicited or taken up within the University precincts for the purpose of raising funds or of obtaining other assistance intended to be sent directly or indirectly to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, The Government of North Vietnam or the Communist Party of North Vietnam.'

During subsequent disciplinary proceedings against three students who broke this directive, Dr. Matheson explained that the new directive 'was provoked by Mr. Dowsley' (who had nothing to do with the Labor Club but wanted to collect non-medical aid for a Chinese town on the border with North Vietnam, in the expectation that it would reach the N.L.F.). He also explained that since his return from overseas he had not, at the time, been 'entirely au fait with events that had been going on'. Finally the Vice-Chancellor justified the conflict between the new directive and the old one by saying 'Since Professor Andrew had given his instruction events had moved on . . .'

The main event which 'moved on' was of course the Government's introduction into Parliament of the 'Defence Force Protection Act', banning all collections except through the Red Cross (which does not send medical supplies to the N.L.F.). Another event worth mentioning, but to which Dr. Matheson did not specifically refer, was Bolte's call for a report, which came in between the two conflicting directives.

Despite the fact that the Bill had not yet come into force so that the student's actions were quite legal, and despite the fact that according to the Vice-Chancellor's own explanations, he had only intended to frustrate Mr. Dowsley's non-medical collections, and had not really understood what he was doing when he made the directive, three students were later convicted of 'misconduct'.

This marked a turning point in the campaign. The introduction of the 'Defence Force Protection Act' made it into a major national political issue, with the Government seeking to use the aid campaign as justification for new repressive legislation and for an attack on the whole of the anti-war movement, and with the 'Opposition' supporting this move. The new ban by Matheson sparked off the first 'confrontation' at Monash, with a major part of the Labor Club's energies being directed for the first time towards a struggle against the University authorities (who now began to be referred to as 'Admin', and seen as 'the enemy').

By raising the question of civil liberties this repression by both the State and the University ended the Labor Club's isolation and placed it in the van of those defending democratic rights, while on the other hand the opponents of the N.L.F. were forced back onto the defensive. As soon as the new Monash ban was announced the Labor Club Executive prepared a statement condemning it as a breach

of faith after the Club had agreed to abide by Professor Andrew's directive in order to avoid involving the University in the conflict between the aid supporters and the Government. The statement said that the Club would defy the ban.

This statement was rejected by a Club general meeting (one can imagine what a general student meeting would have done with it!). Instead the Chairman of the Aid Committee, Peter Price, was instructed by the Club to speak to the Vice-Chancellor before issuing any statement defying his authority. It was hoped that the directive might only be aimed at combating the attempt to circumvent the ban on non-medical aid by sending it to a Chinese border town, and that it would not affect the continuation of the Labor Club's medical aid collections. It was also hoped that if Dr. Matheson did intend to ban medical aid collections then he would agree to delay implementing the ban until after the Defence Force Protection Act had become effective, so that students would be no less free at Monash than elsewhere, and there would be no separate issue at Monash requiring the Labor Club to come into conflict with the University. In those days it was a 'Big Deal' to consider disobeying an order from the Vice-Chancellor!

Needless to say, Dr. Matheson rejected the approach made by Price and informed him that disciplinary action would be taken if the medical aid collections were continued as before. With a hypocrisy that has since come to be regarded as characteristic, Dr. Matheson later announced that his ban still permitted medical aid through the Red Cross, even though he had been told that the Labor Club was not collecting for the Red Cross and the Red Cross was not sending aid to the N.L.F.

It seemed clear from the Vice-Chancellor's attitude that he was deliberately 'cracking down' on the Labor Club a token week or two before the Government did and that this had no purpose except to intimidate Monash students and show which side the University was on in order to curry favour with Bolte and Co. No attempt was made to conceal the fact that the University was responding to outside pressure, and in fact the ban was openly justified on the grounds that the Labor Club's actions were hurting University funds (figures of more than \$1,000,000 were mentioned by some sources). The Labor Club saw this as not only threatening the so-called 'autonomy of the University' (in which it still believed), but also as a direct political support by the University authorities for a repressive Bill that the Club had been trying to defeat. Accordingly it decided to go ahead and defy the ban, and three members, Bill Dowling, Mike Hyde and Albert Langer had their names taken for collecting medical aid at a table in the Union building on Tuesday 5th September. (More than \$60 was collected during one hour.)

It is interesting that on this occasion the 'extremists' of the Labor Club executive were overruled by 'moderates' at a general meeting of the club, in favour of 'reasoned discourse' with the Vice-Chancellor rather than direct action. This was the last time such a thing was to happen within the Labor Club. In the years to come exactly the same process of initial faith in discussion followed by disillusionment and a turn towards action was to occur on a much larger scale in general meetings of the student body as a whole. Until 1967, not even the Labor Club had totally broken with the University administration. In similar circumstances today, a student general meeting would probably be much less hesitant about acting in defiance of a legal directive, than was the small Labor Club in those days.



While all this was going on, a campaign against the Bill was taking shape. Already a medical aid committee had been established at Melbourne University and for unspecified aid at the A.N.U. in Canberra. Similar groups were being formed at Sydney and Adelaide Universities and the Wollongong University College, and a wider non-University 'Victorian Medical Aid Committee' was being formed. In addition to these a number of groups and individuals began to attack the Bill on civil liberties grounds and even the newspapers began expressing doubts about the advisability of cracking down 'too hard'.

The Australian Council of Churches cabled Holt asking that humanitarian aid through voluntary agencies should remain legal, and individuals who were not associated with the aid campaign, such as the editor of the Melbourne University student paper *Farrago*, joined with the Monash Committee in announcing that they would defy the new law.

During this period it was discovered that the Government had allowed Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. to export more than \$4,000,000 of steel to our 'enemy' China. The A.L.P. and the press protested that this showed the Defence Force Protection Act to be hypocritical. The Government defended itself rather lamely by claiming that this was 'non-military steel'. 'to be used only for pots and pans'. Thus through its complaints about the steel incident the Labor Party got itself off the hook in regard to the Defence Force Protection Act while in fact taking a more right-wing anti-communist stand than the Government.

By Friday, 8th September, the Bill had passed all stages in Parliament and it was hurriedly given the 'Royal Assent' by the Governor-General on the Saturday afternoon. The vote was unanimous except for one Independent ex-Liberal member, Senator Hannaford, who had moved to a position of

opposition to the Vietnam war. Cynics commented that Parliament had rarely acted with such speed and unanimity except in regard to members' salaries. The A.L.P. voted overwhelmingly in Caucus to support the Bill with minor modifications and all Labor Parliamentarians, including left-wingers' such as Dr. Jim Cairns. voted for it in the House.

This marked the final break of all links between the Monash Labor Club and the Labor Party. *Print* commented bitterly on behalf of the disillusioned Club members, under the title *Powerlessness without Glory*:

'If the A.L.P. were really Socialist, they would be supporting the National Liberation Front. No one expects this of them; they are, after all, playing politics. No one really expected them to oppose the Bill outlawing collection of funds for aid to the N.L.F. But many of us mistakenly thought that the A.L.P. in the interests of such basic liberties as free speech would oppose the incitement clause. We were wrong, we failed to study our Labor history. We forgot that it was the A.L.P. who sent in troops to break the N.S.W. coalfields strike in 1949, who gaoled Lance Sharkey for a statement more foolish than dangerous. We forgot that every Labor Parliamentarian except Allan Fraser joined with the Libs to become Prosecutor, Judge and Jury in the Browne-Fitzpatrick case (1955). We failed to remember the attitude of the Party (not Evatt) towards the Communist Party Dissolution Act when they let it go through the Senate in 1950. We did not know about the gaoling of Tom Barker by the N.S.W. Labor Government for posters "prejudicial to recruiting" during the 1914-18 war. We were not aware of the political censorship practised by Curtin during the Second World War, we did not remember that the A.L.P. expelled Maurice and Blackburn for advocating friendship with Russia at the

very moment that Russia was Australia's ally against the Nazis.

Some of us had forgotten the basic rule of the A.L.P., that principles take second place to election returns. The A.L.P. very self-righteously disassociated themselves from the Labor Club. *Print* feels that the Labor Club might have more grounds to disassociate itself from the A.L.P.'

Having cut themselves ideologically adrift from the Labor Party, the activists of the Labor Club found themselves continuing to move further and further to the left. From supporting Communism in Vietnam they moved logically to supporting Communism in Australia. In 1967 only one member of the Labor Club was willing to describe himself as a Communist (Marxist-Leninist) in running for election to the Club committee, and he was almost defeated because of it!

## **REVERBERATIONS**

By launching its legislative attack on the campaign, the Government succeeded not only in making Aid to the N.L.F. a major national issue and attracting much new support to the Labor Club stand, but also in creating an 'International Incident'.

On 7th September the text of a letter from Prince Sihanouk to the Melbourne University Labor Club was published in the papers. The letter, hand delivered by the Cambodian Embassy bore the seal of the Royal Government of Cambodia and was in reply to a query as to whether the Cambodian Head of State would assist in channelling aid to the N.L.F. (with whom his Government had diplomatic relations).

The reply said that Sihanouk had forwarded the Melbourne Labor Club's letter 'expressing your support in their just struggle against the American invaders', to the N.L.F., gave them the N.L.F.'s address in Phnom Penh and concluded 'I ask you to accept assurance of my keen sympathy'.

External Affairs Minister Hasluck promptly carpeted the Cambodian Ambassador and reprimanded him for encouraging anti-Government activity in Australia. He then confidently announced that 'the matter is likely to rest there'. However it did not end there and Prince Sihanouk was not amused by this attempt to intimidate him from expressing his opposition to the Americans and support for the Vietnamese N.L.F. He denounced the remarks as 'unacceptable' and immediately withdrew the Ambassador and all Embassy staff from Australia.

It was not until nearly three years later that radical students in Australia were able to repay Sihanouk for the principled stand he took, by taking part in the world wide protests that resulted from the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. The National United Front in Cambodia and the N.L.F. in South Vietnam are now fighting side by side against a common enemy.

A breach of relations with (previously friendly and neutral) Cambodia, was not something the reactionaries had expected or desired from their attack on the N.L.F. Aid Campaign. It was just one more in the series of misjudgements which led the campaign to suppress the aid to backfire and actually assisted it. As *Vanguard*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), put it, applying an apt quotation from Chairman Mao Tsetung:

' "Lifting a rock only to drop it on one's own toes" is a Chinese folk saying to describe the behaviour of certain

fools. The reactionaries of all countries are fools of this kind. In the final analysis, their persecution of the revolutionary people only serves to accelerate the people's revolution on a broader and more intense scale.'

The Marxist-Leninist Party's unconditional support for the students was an important factor in the subsequent movement to a communist position by many Labor Club members.

### **ON CAMPUS ...**

No immediate challenge was made to the Defence Force Protection Act (although funds continued to be collected surreptitiously). This was partly because the Labor Club had not yet decided whether it would be worth risking a two year gaol sentence and partly because its energy had been diverted into fighting off discipline charges at Monash.

On Monday, 18th September an S.R.C. General Meeting of students was held. Although the S.R.C. had given full co-operation to the unconstitutional student general meeting called by the D.L.P. Club previously, it attempted to obstruct the holding of this one. Legal advice was sought in order to do so and the advice received (from the University Legal Officer) was published on the agenda for the meeting. This stated that the chairman was not merely entitled but obliged to refuse some of the motions because under the Crimes Act taken together with the Defence Force Protection Act it was an offence to incite urge, or aid or encourage someone to incite, urge, aid or encourage someone else to commit an offence under the Act! The advice added that several of the more radical motions should be rejected because they 'propose improper use of S.R.C. funds' as opposition to such government measures might not be 'for

the benefit of the student body'. Finally the 'advice' said that motions could be rejected as contravening the discipline of the university in that they 'advocate the contravention of a direction of the Vice-Chancellor'.

Subsequently, the S.R.C. disallowed a number of motions 'liable to incite'. Despite this the meeting of 1500 students (the largest held to that time) condemned the Vice-Chancellor's prohibitions and opposed the Defence Forces Protection Act, the motions being passed by a large majority. But the S.R.C. frustrated an attempt to set up a committee to campaign for the abolition of the disciplinary charges against the three students who had collected aid after the Vice-Chancellor's ban.

Students could already begin to see the reactionary nature of the S.R.C., and it was dissolved the following year as being totally out of touch with student opinion.

(These days most general meetings consider resolutions which 'advocate the contravention of a direction given by the Vice-Chancellor', but at that time students were still mesmerized by the 'proper channels'.)

## **THE TRIAL**

*Lot's Wife* (26th September) reported on the trial: 'On Tuesday, 19th September, the Discipline Committee at Monash University met to consider the case of the three students who had defied the ruling of the Vice-Chancellor concerning aid to the National Liberation Front . . . (Later) He (Mr. Little, the defendant's lawyer) was told he was there at the discretion of the Committee and that he should not expect anything.'

In the chair was Professor Derham, Dean of Law. Unfortunately it did not follow that the rule of law was

supreme. There are some people who believe in a concept known as natural justice, but the Deans pointed out that this was a private matter between them and the students involved and that they could do as they liked. They ignored the furore the issue had created at Monash and the student meeting of the day before.

When the lawyer appeared he asked that it he made an open hearing. No! Can an S.R.C. representative be present? At 12.25 p.m. S.R.C. President Peter Hansen was allowed in. Can a Lot's Wife representative be present? No!

At 12.50 Peter Price, the first witness, was called in. He described what had happened and answered questions.

After Dr. Matheson was called in, he seemed to take over the meeting — rephrasing questions as he wanted. He was right and the defendants were wrong.

The procession started. The major point to arise was that the Vice-Chancellor had not seen a letter from Peter Price addressed to him. This letter had asked for a clarification of his ruling and had been given to his assistant the day before the table had been set up as Matheson had not replied to the letter, the actual position of the Vice-Chancellor was still vague.

The other witnesses gave what was expected of them and after nine hours the hearing was closed.

The defendants were told that they had been found guilty. The Committee then decided on a penalty after taking into account a submission from the Vice-Chancellor asking for a severe reprimand.

The penalty was twenty dollars.

It is about time the structure of the Monash Discipline Committee was investigated. If the University is going to declare illegal actions which are still legal within the community then justice must be seen to be done when the Deans of the University sit in judgement. In my opinion it is not good enough to have to submit to one's superiors if one's equals are not allowed to view the proceedings. Monash is a university, not a high school.'

*Print* accused the Discipline Committee of being biased, calling the trial a 'Dean Machine'. Both reports were subsequently retracted. They were, in fact, quite accurate. and the *Lot's Wife* comment that 'It's about time the structure of the Monash Discipline Committee was investigated'. foreshadowed the Discipline campaigns of the following years. (Note: Even now, five years later, the Administration will not allow discipline hearings to be held publicly.)

The *Print* report was withdrawn because of blatant intimidation by the Vice-Chancellor and weakness on the part of some members of the Club. A 'special assistant to the Vice-Chancellor' summoned the editors of *Print* to the Administration building and threatened them with either a libel suit or disciplinary action if they did not print an immediate and full apology for having dared to describe the Discipline Committee as a 'Kangaroo Court' (Horrors!). Because it was third term and the exams were approaching, a majority of the Labor Club Executive decided not to risk going again before a biased Discipline Committee or an equally biased court. An apology was published with the only gesture of defiance being a statement that:

'A *Print* written by members of the Labor Club will appear on Friday', and the following lines instead of the usual authorisation:



'Authorized by Sir H. Pig, for the Monash Labor Club. The views expressed herein are not the views of very many members of the Labor Club.'

Even this was removed from a subsequent edition.

*Lot's Wife* also withdrew its (entirely reasonable) report. This incident sheds some light on the suggestion that the University's disciplinary and legal powers are only used against radicals to prevent 'disruption'. If they can get away with it at any time, the authorities will also use these powers to just plain intimidate dissent and impose censorship — they will even use them to obtain false recantations.

The transcript of the proceedings was made a secret document with publication prohibited on pain of disciplinary action, so students were denied the opportunity to judge for themselves whether the proceedings were 'fair' or not. However we have obtained access to it and are publishing some excerpts below in direct defiance of this disciplinary threat. As the transcript is slightly inaccurate, having been made from a tape recording rather than by competent court reporters, and as the excerpts were selected to make a point this should not be taken as an authoritative description of the trial. If the Administration objects to this partial publication then we would suggest that they should not be afraid to publish the lot and let people see for themselves what happened.

One feature that does come out from an examination of the full transcript is that although the result of the trial was obviously pre-determined, in many respects it was less of a 'show' than later ones. Perhaps because of the novelty of the situation, the Committee actually seemed interested in what the defendants had to say and Deans even argued with the students over such questions as the validity of the Vice-

Chancellor's actions, the students' motives in defying his ruling and so on. The proceedings were completed in one day with a lot of legalistic pretence like that which characterized later 'trials'. While points of controversy were consistently decided in favour of the prosecution and the defendant's legal representative was given little scope, at least the real points in issue were brought out in the open (giving the students an opportunity to air their views on matters which Dr. Matheson had refused to discuss with them outside the context of the disciplinary proceedings). Also the prosecution witnesses gratuitously made such statements as 'I should emphasize that throughout my entire enquiry the students concerned were most courteous' in reference to the 'confrontation' and there were no ludicrous allegations of 'violence', 'intimidation' and so on.

The University's official attitudes is appallant in the following extracts from the transcript:

*Mr. Little:* (defendant's lawyer) 'You have said in paragraph 5(a) (Of a statement *Monash University and Vietnam* issued on the 12th September to all members of the University) that "collecting unspecified funds which might be used by the N.L.F. for military purposes was repugnant to so many people that it should not be permitted on the campus". Who were the many people to whom you referred?'

*Vice-Chancellor:* 'The Australian public at large'

*Mr. Little:* 'Did you actually sound out the Australian public at large?'

*Vice-Chancellor:* 'I just, if you like, assumed that this was the case. Maybe if one had a Gallup Poll maybe one would find that it was not the case.'

*Mr. Stewart:* (Prosecuting lawyer) 'I think this lacks propriety. It seems we are exploring the propriety of the Vice-Chancellor's actions (objection upheld).

Later:

*Mr. Little:* (Referred to paragraph six of the Vice-Chancellor's statement which says 'Because the University exists, among other things, to promote comment and debate I have given my support to the next Vietnam Forum after having satisfied myself that virtually all points of view will be presented; it is expected that speakers will include the Minister for the Army, Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Santamaria'.)

'Did you mean to imply that those three represent all the points in the issue?'

*Vice-Chancellor:* 'No, but they were a fair spread, I thought. Paragraph six was intended to explain my attitude about political controversy. You were at some pains to point out that I should take no steps to restrain political activity. In the past I have given support to forums on all sorts of subjects; in the case of the Vietnam Forum, I was especially concerned to make sure, because of my belief in the University being politically neutral, that the speakers would cover all sides.

(Could it be that the Vice-Chancellor, innocent of suppressing awkward political viewpoints, was just not even aware of the existence of a view left of Whitlam, and genuinely believed that Whitlam, Santamaria and the Minister for the Army represented a 'fair spread'? An even more frightening possibility! Ed.)

Later:

*Mr. Little:* 'Did it seem to you improper to issue this statement on the 12th September after charges had been

made against my clients?'

*Vice-Chancellor:* 'No, I was at some pains to draw your attention to the middle of paragraph four: "further comment is therefore out of order for the time being." '

(*Comment:* In other words it was not improper for Dr. Matheson to attack the N.L.F. campaign for aid while the matter was sub judice because he was aware that it was sub judice. On the other hand it would be most improper for anyone to reply! This is fairly typical of Matheson's attitude. The statement in question claimed that: 'There is no such body as the N.L.F. Red Cross' but that 'collecting for genuine civil aid was certainly permitted'. This gave the impression that the three students being disciplined had dishonestly pretended to be collecting medical aid when in fact they were not genuinely doing so. When he made this statement Dr. Matheson was fully aware that the three students were collecting for a fund which had been authorized by the Acting Vice-Chancellor as one to which 'no person would object'. The London Doctor's Committee headed by Lord Boyd Orr contained many members of the British Government, was recognized as a charity and had the co-operation of the Ministry of Health in sending medical supplies direct to the N.L.F.'s 'Liberation Red Cross'. Despite this knowledge Dr. Matheson deliberately used the University position he holds in order to discredit the students' action and effectively call them liars through the press.)

The Chairman summed up by asserting that since Matheson's directive did not exceed his powers, the students were clearly guilty of contravening it, and while 'counsel on behalf of the students addressed the Committee on a wide range of matters going to university traditions, freedom, principles of democracy, parliamentary

government and many other matters which were found interesting and moving . . . they did not appear to us however to go effectively in any case, to the primary question that was then concerning us, and that was the validity of the Vice-Chancellor's order which we have found was contravened by these students . . .'

Before even considering their verdict the Committee made arrangement for Dr. Matheson to be available for comment on sentence.

Dr. Matheson provided the following written statement (in advance) . . . 'This is the first time in my experience of the university and indeed, of thirty years of academic life, that students have deliberately defied an instruction of mine — I do not see how I can carry the responsibility for the discipline of the university if this is to be permitted. [The first of many subtle hints at resignation which have never actually been carried out, despite many subsequent examples of 'deliberate defiance' of Dr. Matheson's instructions.—Ed.] The question of the wisdom of my instructions is not one for the Discipline Committee. Others in my position might have taken a different attitude but again that is not the matter at issue. Since it has been found that these students did deliberately and defiantly disobey an instruction of mine in the proper exercise of my authority the question must arise of whether they should be allowed to remain members of the University . . .'

After such threats, Matheson concluded with a show of clemency: 'justice will be done if the students were severely reprimanded and informed that any future misdemeanor on their part would necessarily involve heavier punishment.'

The Committee dutifully adopted this proposal but showing great strength threw in a \$20 fine as well.

Following the trial, sympathy for the Labor Club increased and support for Dr. Matheson decreased. He sent off a flurry of letters to the papers complaining of the 'apparent impossibility of getting accurate information across to the students or anyone else' and stating that 'at no time has there been any restriction on the campus of the freedom of discussion of any matter, political or otherwise'. *National U* (29th September), published by the (then) National Union of Australian University Students, commented:

'The decision of the Disciplinary Committee was obviously the maximum they could impose without an outcry from the students, and the minimum they could impose without an outcry from the public . . .

Their (the three students) defiance of the Vice-Chancellor's decree was a deliberate "test" of civil liberties on the campus ...

Albeit, the three students and their supporters do have the respect of most Monash students for their guts and sincerity. For indeed, student apathy is far more dangerous than such activities.'

The students refused to pay the fines, which were later paid by a staff collection initiated by a visiting professor from Cambridge, Joan Robinson.

Since this deliberate test of civil liberties on the campus, *de facto* freedom of political organization (e.g. fund raising) as well as the freedom of 'discussion' has been recognized by the Administration. While they still do not recognize it officially they have been forced to recognize it in practice simply by the fact that students have ignored their prohibitions. If the Labor Club had not defied the ban in 1967 this question could still be in dispute today.

An interesting sidelight was cast on the whole affair when one of the students appealed to the University Council against his fine. The Appeals Committee more or less admitted many of the points in his appeal but upheld the original decision so that Monash would not appear 'weak'. The Committee included Mr. J. Woods (Trades Hall Council), and Professor Legge of the Monash History Department. Its chairman was Sir James Forrest (director of numerous companies). The decision after a completely closed hearing was unanimous.

Most fascinating was the response when the appellant asked for access to the transcript of the appeal hearing. The University Council instead decided to have it officially destroyed in his presence. This incredible act reminiscent of medieval book-burning was apparently carried out because the prosecution had been so thoroughly exposed that they did not want to risk the continued existence of the transcript, even as a 'classified', Administration document. Students were not greatly impressed in later years when the authorities were to claim that they were defending the University as a centre for reasoned discourse (and book-burning!), and that any injustices in the disciplinary proceedings could be taken to the courts (providing that Admin hasn't destroyed the evidence first!).

Ever since the first discipline trials, closed hearings have been the inflexible practice at Monash. The Administration's 'Justice' has been of the type which 'must be done, but must not be seen while being done'!

After the Discipline trial had finished, the Labor Club returned to the main question of the Defence Forces Protection Act itself. On 2nd October a statement was issued by eight members saying that they had sent a total of \$100 for medical aid to the N.L.F. and that they had not sent it

through the Red Cross and had therefore contravened the Act:

'We believe that the Act is not really intended to protect our Defence Forces but to repress opposition to the government at home. It is becoming increasingly clear that our Defence Forces can only be protected by bringing them home where they can be used for defence, not aggression. The government believes that it can prevent opposition to the war by bringing down a few special acts of parliament. But they are wrong. The government must learn that so long as there are people with conscientious beliefs in Australia, their thoughts and actions cannot and will not be stifled by the passing of a repressive Bill — It should have learnt this lesson in Vietnam where it has employed the use of not merely Acts of Parliament but bombs, bullets and napalm against the people of Vietnam, and yet these people have continued to stand up for their rights.'

The Commonwealth Police duly 'investigated' but resorted to the dodge of finding there was 'insufficient evidence'. Accordingly the students sent signed statements and proof (a copy of the receipt for \$200 they had sent to the N.L.F.) to the Commonwealth Police. This was reported (including a photograph of the receipt) in the *Herald* (18th October).

This time the Attorney-General decided that no offence had been committed because the aid was being sent to the London Doctors Committee and this had not been officially proscribed under the Act. (In fact it was an offence as the students had admitted that their money was being sent 'with a view to it being made available' to the N.L.F.) The Governor in Council then made an official 'proclamation' that the London Committee and the Liberation Red Cross' were bodies described under the Act, and it was announced



that in future anyone sending aid in this way would be prosecuted.

Subsequently about 70 to 100 people sent postal notes for \$1 each to the London Committee but no action was taken. Since that time the Act has effectively been a dead letter so that looking back it can be said that the campaign for Aid to the N.L.F. was a complete and unqualified success.

## **OVERVIEW**

Probably the most significant thing about the campaign is that despite the massive attempts to whip up an hysterical public reaction against both the N.L.F. aiders and the whole anti-war movement, the Government campaign simply fell flat. Had right-wingers attempted to support the Nazis during the war against fascism they would with perfect justification have swiftly been smashed by violent public reaction. Even during the Korean War and the Malayan 'emergency', which were just as much imperialist wars of aggression as Vietnam but were not seen in this light by many people, it would have been politically impossible for the left-wingers to have publicly organized support for the 'enemy'. Nevertheless in 1967 it was possible to organize such support. As was pointed out by the D.L.P., the students were attempting to establish a new 'right' — the right to support an enemy with whom the Government is at war. They succeeded in establishing this right — because most Australians did not see it as a patriotic war or in any sense as 'our war' or 'Australia's War' but as 'their war' — 'America's war' and the 'Government's war'. No Australian would take kindly to aid and comfort being given to Australia's enemies but in fact, as was proved by the lack of real support for the Government's campaign, most Australians did not see the Vietnamese as their 'enemy'. Passage of the special Act of Parliament did not mean that

the government had succeeded in preventing this new 'right' being established — on the contrary, it served to underline that the right had been established — not only because the law, like Dr. Matheson's directive, proved to be a complete 'paper tiger' but also because it had been necessary in the first place. There are three ways in which the Labor Club's campaign could have been defeated. First, if the 'out-raged public opinion' at Monash and outside had forced the Club to give up. The Second, if the Labor Club leadership had decided to 'tactically' water down their position to 'humanitarian' support for the 'victims of the war' in N.L.F. areas in Vietnam. This position was urged on the club by the revisionist Communist Party and had a certain appeal amongst some sections of the Club. It was backed up by comments in the newspapers that 'of course nobody would object to purely medical aid' and by Professor Andrew's action in donating to the medical fund while banning financial aid. If this approach had been adopted then the campaign would have been defeated — the 'right to support the enemy' when the government is waging an unjust war of aggression would not have been asserted and the range of 'legitimate' anti-war sentiment would have continued to have been contained within the bounds of anti-Communism and of support for aims, if not the methods, of the U.S. and its allies. It would have been some time before the 'mainstream' anti-war movement in Australia began to see itself as allied with the Vietnamese rather than a 'loyal opposition'.

However, despite some manoeuvring to forestall an internal coup and despite the decision not to defy the ban on collecting non-medical aid at Monash, the club did not water down its position. Its propaganda continued to affirm unconditional political support for the N.L.F. victory over the Australian and American invaders and collections were continued for both humanitarian medical aid on campus and

direct financial aid from private donors (not on campus) to help the Vietnamese win. This stand cut right through the prevailing anti-Communist atmosphere and forced people to think about what the war was really about. It eventually forced the 'official' anti-war movement to abandon its slogan 'Stop the Bombing, Negotiate' (which really did not actually oppose the war itself and recognized that the U.S. had a right to 'negotiate the future of Vietnam'), and to adopt a position of working for the defeat of U.S. war aims. As a result the government's legislation was a failure. So much a failure that today collections are being openly carried out, at Monash and elsewhere, and it would now be politically impossible for either the Government or the University authorities to prosecute successfully! (Monash students wishing to make donations can give them to the Worker-Student Alliance, others can send them to its letter box c/o Union.) In 1966 it would probably have been politically impossible to publicly support the Vietnamese. The Government was actually able to win an election campaign with propaganda using such cretinous phrases as 'the red cancer of communism' and the 'threat from the north'. Today these phrases are just standing jokes, and the whole atmosphere has changed. The failure of the 'Defence Force Protection Act' probably marked the turning point in that change — a change which, under the impetus of the Indo-Chinese people's smashing defeats to U.S. aggression there, has now gone so far that the majority of Australian people oppose Government policies on the war and 100,000 were willing to march in Melbourne during the first Moratorium. Dr. Matheson would not dare try to enforce his ban on aid collections at Monash today and it would be 'politically impossible' for anyone to organize public support for the U.S. war effort at Monash anymore. Last time the C.M.F. tried to recruit on campus it was bodily removed by angry students and had its weapons confiscated, it hasn't been allowed to return since! Readers should be aware of the

considerable change in atmosphere since 1967 in considering the impact of the N.L.F. campaign and events at Monash.

Dr. Matheson no longer expresses 'concern' to make sure that Whitlam and Santamaria can dominate a Vietnam forum. He is more 'concerned' these days to protect pro-U.S. speakers at Monash from being driven off the campus, in the way that Nixon's 'special advisor on youth' was in 1971. Both the suppression of left-wingers in 1971 and the protection of right-wingers in 1971 were justified in terms of the University's neutrality. Nevertheless, the shift from offensive to defensive is significant. Times have changed!

# The Mock Crucifixion 1968

1968 marked a turning point in student affairs at Monash. The issue of the relationship between State and University still smouldered, and blazed up brightly over the affair of the Mock Crucifixion; it burnt even more fiercely when the Administration attempted to extend its powers of discipline over students' off-campus activities, and finally led to the establishment of the Campaign for University Freedom. C.U.F. was the first 'broad front' organization at Monash. By now, students were beginning to realize that it was imperative that they should act together to control their own affairs.

The Monash Association of Students was born, replacing the conservative and largely powerless S.R.C., by a participatory democratic structure, in which all major decisions were to be made by student general meetings. Thus a feeling of the political responsibility of the whole student body was generated, and the student movement at Monash was considerably broadened.

The most interesting aspect of 1968's celebrated Mock Crucifixion was the reaction to it. For the actual performance — though a spontaneous and somewhat inventive jaunt, and though great fun at the time — is, in retrospect, a bit boring. The political importance of this otherwise trivial issue lay in the close, immediate cooperation between the University and the State.

The Mock Crucifixion took place on Thursday, 11th April. A student 'Christ' staggered through the Union carrying a cardboard cross, pursued by student 'Romans' with whips, and in the rear a student played 'Onward Christian Soldiers'

badly on a tuba. The procession made its way to the rock-pile by the ornamental pond where the 'crucifixion' took place.

*Truth* published its outraged account soon after. At first the students involved were simply amused. But then the reaction against them began to grow claws. Critics emerged who displayed their displeasure in varying degrees.

There were those who thought the affair was disgustingly blasphemous, and the actors should have been hung, drawn and subdivided. These wonderful Christian souls demanded public admonishment. There were others who weren't personally offended but who thought that the scene must have offended others. It was largely this group that produced a spate of pretentious and uninformed articles of the type labelled 'Monash in Search of a Good Name' and 'Normal Bounds of Protest'. And finally, there were those who 'agreed' with it, but thought the show was very unsubtle in execution.

There were also a few people who actually liked and supported the action. But it was after the *Truth* article that the fun really started. Soon after the authorities decided that the way was clear to issue proceedings against the ratbags involved. They sent the students the following request:

'Dear Mr. —, would you please report to the Council Room, University Offices Building today, Thursday 2nd May, 1968, at 4.00 p.m. Yours sincerely, J. D. Butchart, Academic Register.'

In the Council Room, however, the students found they were not confronted by an academic matter, but a couple of C.I.B. smoothies who with greasy grins, paper threats and good

intentions eked (or oinked?) out sufficient information from a sufficient number of people to charge fourteen of the students with offensive behaviour.

The Administration had jumped at the opportunity to bow to the wishes of the State. Monash already had the reputation of being radical, and the Mock Crucifixion was an opportunity to attack and divide students, aided by the barrage of press invective. The Administration not only cooperated with the police by providing rooms for them. but was not even honest enough to inform the students that they were to be interrogated.

Then followed the punchline of the whole joke — the infamous trial. The police felt it was necessary to be represented by a Q.C. The students, with legal representation provided by M.A.S. for their part, gained moral support at a party held in a nearby house during the trial. The magistrate, as impartial as any, told the Court that as soon as he had read that there had been a mock crucifixion he had read nothing further about it, so he was satisfied that he was not prejudiced! He did not explain what prejudice caused him to put down his newspaper on merely reading the terrible headline! His conclusion was that the charged students had good intentions, and benevolently awarded one-year bonds to the fourteen.

The connivance between the University and the police (rather than the charges themselves) prompted students to hold one of the first brief sit-ins in the Administration building, in support of the charged students.

# The S.R.C. Crumbles

1967 was the year that the Students' Representative Council lost its nerve. Up till that year, students had annually elected a 28-man S.R.C. which each year had nominated more and more representatives to the University committees, generated more and more paper work and spent its time in the normal 'student leader' pastime of political infighting. In retrospect, it is not in the least bit surprising that such an isolated group should lose its nerve at the first appearance of real student participation and should finally crumble when students realized what it really stood for.

Over the past year, students connected with student government had been increasingly dissatisfied with the level of student control of their own affairs. Annually each student had paid a Union fee of about \$40 which paid for the Cafeteria, Clubs, Sports and the S.R.C. All this was administered by a Union Board comprised mainly of representatives of Admin and a small minority of students, and the latter were not elected by the student body, but nominated by the S.R.C.

The President of the S.R.C., Jim Falk, pointed to the dangers of this composition in his introduction to the 1967 S.R.C. manual:

'A potential weakness of the Monash S.R.C.'s relationship with the rest of the University is that it receives its funds from a "Union Board" which has a minority student membership.'



In mid 1967 a small group consisting of four ex-Presidents of the S.R.C. and the editor of Lot's Wife decided to raise the question with the students. They quickly gained support for the idea and on 10th May, 1967, about 200 students attended the first ever 'General Meeting of the Union' to ask that the Union be run more democratically. *Print* reported the proceedings:

'At the Union General Meeting last week the S.R.C. Executive moved an amendment to one of the motions before the meeting. The amendment suggested the S.R.C. was more capable of choosing student representatives than the student body itself.

'When this was justifiably defeated the Resident Executive correctly inferred that the students had no confidence in them.

'They decided to make a desperate bid to increase confidence in the S.R.C. and presented a list of demands to the Vice-Chancellor, intending to resign if the demands were not met.'

In the meantime some hard thinking on the representative nature of the S.R.C. was going on. Surveys were made to determine student attitudes to the S.R.C. and the results were highly unfavourable. Finally, a motion to suspend the activities of the S.R.C. was placed on notice by Gordon and Falk to be discussed at the meeting on Wednesday, 17th May.

The Resident Executive met with Dr. Matheson on Monday, 15th May and whilst he refused to recognize the S.R.C. as the legal voice of student opinion and take notice of its submissions he was opposed to the S.R.C. suspension motion and would do everything in his power to 'strengthen

the hand' of the President, P. J. Hansen. When the S.R.C. met on Wednesday, 17th May, they readily agreed that they had failed to represent the students, and passed the following motion:

'This Council agrees that

(i) The S.R.C. does not have the support or interest of the students;

(ii) The S.R.C. is not representative of students, taking into account its actions, the number of people who vote in the S.R.C. elections and its lack of strong representation on University bodies;

(iii) the S.R.C. does not have the confidence of the Vice-Chancellor or other University staff and officials.'

However the more right wing members of the S.R.C., led by a ferocious speech by the Warden of the Union, Mr. Graham Sweeney, intimidated the moderates and the motion:

'that the S.R.C. does from the closing of this meeting suspend all operations in order to allow students to decide, at a General Meeting of Students, whether they want an S.R.C. or not, and if so, what sort of representative body, or bodies, they feel would serve them the best.'

was strongly defeated. Instead the S.R.C. decided to hold a weekend conference on the problem. At this point the three member 'left group' on the S.R.C. resigned, and issued the following statement.

'Because the decision which the S.R.C. has made is utterly opposed to participatory democracy, we have been forced to the belief that the present structure of

the S.R.C. is incapable of reform from within. Therefore we resign from this S.R.C. in the hope that the student body will dictate for the future a more democratic form of student government.'

Over the next few weeks a plan for restructuring student government at Monash, so that all interested students could take part in the decisions that affected them, was mapped out by Falk and Price. The plan was put to the S.R.C. weekend conference which adopted it in principle and expanded some of the details. The Conference recommended restructuring the S.R.C. into a Committee of Representatives comprising students directly elected to University committees, a Public Affairs Committee whose members would be elected on political platforms and an administrative Council that would carry out the day-to-day administration. All decisions would be finally subject to change by student general meetings.

The Labor Club refused to take part in the Conference following their policy that the students, not the student politicians, should decide the structure of the student governing body. On Tuesday, 25th July, the proposals came out in a special issue of *Lot's Wife*. John Price introduced them saying:

'The S.R.C. spends a lot of student money, a fair proportion of it in administration of itself. Various presidents at various times have conducted reforms to make the system work. It began with an Executive, then it had standing committees to do the hack work, then semi-autonomous sub-committees. Now it's got two Executives. All this, whilst to no great extent increasing efficiency, has made the S.R.C. more remote from the people they represent, us the students.'

A meeting to discuss the proposals was called on the 17th June in the Alexander Theatre. The meeting failed to raise the required quorum of 150 students. The Labor Club was not surprised.

*Print* warned in earlier issues that attempts to change the structure of the S.R.C. from above, rather than in response to a dynamic from the student body were doomed to failure.

The students responded to being ignored by the bureaucrats in classic fashion, they ignored both reformers and defenders of the status quo. (*Print* 18th June).

Further meetings were overshadowed by the Labor Club's Aid the N.L.F. Campaign.

Because the Labor Club had decided not to run candidates for the S.R.C. elections, the S.R.C. proved far more conservative at meetings called over aid to the N.L.F. The issue of the S.R.C.'s representativeness disappeared below the surface of student activity, to resurface again after the Christmas vacation.

## **THE DEATH OF THE S.R.C.**

During the first term of 1968 an attempt was made to establish reforms from within the S.R.C. and several students were elected to the S.R.C. with a conscious policy of adopting the changes recommended by Weekend Conference. The S.R.C. President, Noel Lethborg, was selected on a platform of reform and a Presidential Select Committee recommended that the political affairs of the S.R.C. should be handed over to an experimental Public Affairs Committee. But before anything could be done to set it up the students were shocked by reports in the press of a

proposed new draft discipline statute: — a highly irregular way of promulgating new university regulations!

The article appeared in *The Age* on 15th May, and a general meeting of students was held on 16th May. The meeting voted for the first ever sit-in in the Admin Building. The S.R.C. met that night, but spent the whole evening heatedly discussing the report of the Presidential Select Committee, while the right-wing members of the S.R.C. tried desperately to stall the meeting until the proxy vote of a reform supporter expired. Elliot Gingold, Vice-President of the S.R.C. said in an open letter to all members of the S.R.C. the next day,

'This must be the first time in any university that a "governing" body, meeting the evening after a mass demonstration, neglected to discuss it. Not that it mattered, any decision made by a body of the calibre displayed by the S.R.C. could not contribute anything.

'If S.R.C. members are going to carry on in the way they did at the meeting, they should resign. If they did not, the student body will deal with them the way they deserve.'

The S.R.C. proved irrelevant to events in the forth-coming month. An open, united front, 'Campaign for University Freedom', was formed to resist the proposed discipline statute, and rallies were held daily in the upstairs foyer of the Union. S.R.C. members found that they had no empathy with the students they purported to represent and that the students themselves had seized the initiative.

When the S.R.C. met on the night of Thursday, 13th June, it was in an atmosphere of complete depression. It was clear to many members that the S.R.C. had been totally unable to take any leadership over the discipline issue and that the

students had taken the matter into their own hands. The students had lost confidence in the S.R.C. and the S.R.C. in their own effectiveness. After a long and heated debate they decided to disband and ask the students what sort of organization they wanted. The next day the following notice was circulated:

'S.R.C. TO DISBAND 14.6.68

At its meeting last night, the Monash S.R.C. decided to disband itself within the next 14 days, during which time a student general meeting will be held to discuss the future of student government at this University.

This meeting will be able to adopt new forms of student government, or if it wishes, continue with the present structure.

Submissions for this meeting, and for a special edition of *Lot's Wife*, should be handed in to the S.R.C. office if possible by Monday, 17th June, 1968.

Noel Lethborg,

President,

Monash 8th S.R.C.'

*The Age* quoted Lethborg as saying the 'discipline issue has shown (the S.R.C.) to be totally unrepresentative'.

\*M.A.S. IS BORN \*

The special edition of *Lot's Wife*, published on the 21st June, centred largely on the so-called 'Price-Falk Proposals' — basically the proposals that had been adopted by the Weekend Conference in late 1967 but with increased

emphasis on the total subservience of all student representative organizations to the students. Any issue would be open to discussion by interested students at a General Meeting of Students, and their decision would bind officers and committees in the new structure. Other proposals, ranging from changes in the S.R.C. to the radical proposal of no student government at all, were circulated.

A great deal of discussion occurred over the next few days and a General Meeting was called on Tuesday, 25th June. On the Tuesday morning, the Price-Falk proposals came out in the form of a 6 page roneoed set of guidelines called 'A Plan for a New Students' Organization'. It was signed by six members of the S.R.C. including the President, Noel Lethborg, and the Vice-President, Elliot Gingold.

The Liberal Club newsletter, *Stand*, came out supporting the Price-Falk reform.

'A student representative body is one which should positively represent the student body, be an organization with which the students can identify themselves, and above all, be a body that can carry out its respective functions efficiently and effectively. The S.R.C. as we had it, failed to carry out these functions . . .

In the new system, student general meetings will play a greater role in the expression of student opinion and act as a system of recall for malfunctioning representatives. In the recent past, such meetings have become excellent vehicles of expression of student opinion . .

The Labor Club had agreed to support the Price-Falk reform provided that the Public Affairs Committee was to be included in the proposal; the D.L.P. Club decided to oppose it, and they had their speakers mustered for the meeting.

At 1 o'clock about 2000 students crowded into the upstairs foyer of the Student Union and in an atmosphere of intense excitement the debate on the first motion began. The first motion, moved by Jim Falk, seconded by Elliot Gingold, stated the two basic proposed changes:

'that students who represent the general student body on University policy-making committees should be directly elected and that any form of student government should be based on . . . the principle of student participation.'

After twenty minutes of debate, the motion was carried overwhelmingly.

Next followed the crucial motion to dissolve the S.R.C. To be carried, it required two thirds of those present to vote for it. It was moved by John Price. After a further twenty minutes of debate, it was put to the vote and there was an outburst of applause and cheering as people realized that out of the 2000 people present, only about thirty were voting against the motion. The meeting then adjourned till Thursday. On the Thursday morning, the D.L.P. Club and ex-Treasurer of the S.R.C. made a last ditch stand and produced a leaflet entitled '*Is Monash Controlled by a Radical Violent Group?*' It said:

'Is this the same group who rioted outside the U.S. Consulate in Commercial Road, and had some of its members bailed out of the South Melbourne lock-up by Ted McCormack of the Waterside Workers' Federation . . .

You may be prepared to attend general meetings now but what about third term and the vacation period that amounts to half the year. If you don't want to attend



these meetings the radical minority will hold in their own hands the power to decide "majority" opinion . . .

What is needed is a cross-section of specially elected faculty representatives . .

The students, however, were unimpressed by the D.L.P.'s smaller annually elected S.R.C.-type body and opted for a chance to make their own decisions. By an overwhelming majority they adopted the Price-Falk proposals with a few amendments.

The new body was called the 'Monash Association of Students', M.A.S. The Public Affairs Committee, P.A.C., was set up at another General Meeting on Thursday, 11th July, 1968.

## **AN EVALUATION OF M.A.S.**

It is important to note the essential differences between the old system and the new one. The S.R.C. was based on parliamentary principle that once people were elected, their subsequent decisions could then be taken as representing the views of all the people who were qualified to vote for them. It was continually torn by the brutal fact that it had no real claim to mirror the students' views and that it was distrusted or ignored by the vast majority of students as well as by Admin. M.A.S. was based on the principle that all students interested should make the major decisions — that no one was more qualified to speak or decide for a group of students than the group of students themselves, whether the group be large or small.

The new committees — the Administrative Executive(intended to be a purely administrative body), the Committee of Representatives (a loose committee of all students who had been elected to University Committees),

and the Public Affairs Committee (a committee of 15 student selected on political platforms) — were created to serve General Meetings of Students and they were to make sure that major questions were put before the students for them to decide.

During the formation of M.A.S., all sorts of scare tactics were used to try to forestall the change. Some students argued that there would be continuous elections and that no-one would vote, no-one would come to General Meetings, no-one would stand for positions, and that by third term the whole thing would have collapsed into anarchy. These arguments proved false. Whereas the S.R.C. had struggled to find 26 people to nominate for it, M.A.S. filled all its positions with ease. In the first year, 65 people nominated for the 15-man P.A.C. and in the second, over 100. Over its first three years the size of General Meetings grew to an estimate of about 5000 participants for important issues.

Two postal referenda were held in 1969 and 1970 on the Constitution of M.A.S. At both referenda, an alternative scheme — the 'Gibson-Watson Proposal' — was put up. The proposal would have had the effect of forcing all M.A.S. decisions to a referendum, thereby hideously delaying the whole process of decision-making. Both times the 'Gibson-Watson Proposal' was soundly defeated. A proposal to return to an S.R.C.-type 'Student Parliament' also gained little support apart from the right-wing Monash University Society which put it up.

During the first two years, M.A.S. proved a dynamic vehicle for expression by students and was sufficiently elastic to provide the facilities needed for the many issues that arose. That it was effective was emphasized by the fact that Dr. Matheson used every available opportunity to try to have it replaced by a more impotent S.R.C.-type structure.

Dr. Matheson's attacks have been two-pronged: that the students are manipulated by a small minority of political agitators at the meetings, and that meetings are too small to be 'representative'.

The charge of manipulation is based on the mistaken premise that the only discussion that goes on about issues occurs at meetings, and that the students do not have the ability to make up their own minds. It ignores the interest, the discussions and the broadsheets, the announcements by the Admin closed-circuit T.V. broadcasts and other forms of dialogue that occur before important General Meetings. Besides, this charge has only been levelled when motions unpopular with the Admin are passed; the charge was not, for instance, levelled at the meeting early in 1970 which defeated a motion condemning Professor Westfold and the Science Faculty Board for refusing to admit Langer to M.Sc. Prelim. Indeed Dr. Matheson himself, when he views it opportune calls general meetings of the University.

The charge that meetings are small is inaccurate for all major issues. As student interest increases in an issue, the size of previously so called 'unrepresentative' meetings increases dramatically. But this is in any event irrelevant within the philosophy of M.A.S. It is irrelevant to the principle that M.A.S. must remain as it was originally intended — the servant of all students interested in any given issue.

Admin's attempts to reduce M.A.S.'s power have not all been merely vocal. A clause in the Act establishing Monash was suddenly 'discovered' in 1969. The clause states that University monies may be used only for 'University purposes' and the Administration has used it to stop M.A.S. spending money on a number of activities of which they disapprove.

Student protest has been slowly gathering momentum over the Administration's attempts, and in late 1971 the University Council agreed to a compromise that it would allow M.A.S. to spend 5% of its budget as it wished. Whether this compromise is implemented will depend both on the University Council and the State Government and on the solidarity of the students.

In early 1971 the Labor Club ran two candidates for the Administrative Executive on a policy of turning the A.E. into a fighting left-wing body. The right also ran several candidates, rather more surreptitiously. Both attempts were defeated by students who voted for candidates who stood on platforms of keeping the A.E.'s role purely administrative.

The right have consistently tried to replace M.A.S. with a parliamentary-type body which would 'represent' the students. The idea that a person who is elected at an annual election then possesses some form of 'mandate' to speak on behalf of the electorate on all issues and to spend their money as he sees fit, is a deep-rooted part of our culture. The catch-word 'representative' has achieved slogan status. The radical participatory principle behind M.A.S., that all controversial issues should be resolved by those interested in them, is hard to appreciate without experiencing the results of each philosophy and comparing them. The many ways in which the structure of M.A.S. differs from conventional government derive from this principle of participation. Instead of elections for general 'representative' positions, all elections in the M.A.S. system are held for specific positions, the nature of which are spelt out, so that the candidates can be compared for that job on the basis of their policies and experience.

The committees and officers of M.A.S. are servants of Student General Meetings and instead of laying down

policy, they draft policy for General Meetings to consider, alter, accept or reject.

The essential feature of M.A.S. is the General Meeting, and the Right have continuously tried to find ways to destroy or discredit it. So far they have not succeeded. The Left, on the other hand, has supported and worked through M.A.S., though it has had criticisms of its structure. Some members would prefer to see M.A.S. more decentralized, with small faculty meetings a few days before the large General Meetings. This, they feel, would give more students an opportunity to discuss the issues involved. With the increasing size of Monash and of the quorums for General Meetings, many students are confused and frustrated by the bureaucratic way in which Meetings are often conducted. Clearly the Left supports the principle of participatory democracy, but would prefer to see the M.A.S. version extended. They consider this especially necessary in 1972, when M.A.S. will be under attack from the National Civic Council through its campus 'front', the D.L.P. Club (at present calling itself the 'Monash Democrats').

[Since this chapter was written, the attack predicted has taken place, with Supreme Court writs being taken out by right-wingers Keith Harvey and Mark LaPirow, claiming that M.A.S. is not a legally constituted body and that the University has no right to distribute funds to it. They have sought a freezing of the M.A.S. funds and an order to pay back to the University all funds which have been distributed previously to M.A.S. The only action taken by M.A.S. so far has been to dismiss Harvey and LaPirow from their positions on P.A.C. Nothing further has been heard of the writ since. A similar writ at La Trobe University has succeeded in the Supreme Court resulting in a freezing of some S.R.C. funds. —Ed.]

During 1971, M.A.S. started to show a weakening of student support for less important meetings. The quorum of over 500 students for a meeting was not achieved for about one third of the meetings. Indeed M.A.S., conceived in a time of crisis, was beginning to show real problems in times when student political involvement was primarily in off-campus issues.

M.A.S. has, of course, safeguards built into its structure to cope with the decline of student interest. The three committees, P.A.C., C.O.R. and A.E., have between them sufficient power to maintain student services and to provide directly elected representation for students to the University Administration. They do not have power to make press statements without a General Meeting, and they would be handicapped in commenting on external matters.

However, to rely on the present structure in such a situation would be extremely destructive to the basic philosophy behind M.A.S. It would encourage the growth of the bureaucratic power vested in the three committees and would lead to the alienation of the students from their representational machinery, a situation characteristic of the old S.R.C. It would eat at the heart of M.A.S., the principle of decision-making by the students interested.

The reason for the present problem is that the quorums for meetings were raised from one and one-half per cent of the student population to 5%. This was done during 1970, after considerable agitation by the Right, to ensure that the very controversial decisions being made at the time were made by meetings that had been adequately advertised and to ensure that the importance of these issues was understood.

Whilst quorums of this size are appropriate for highly controversial issues, they are not for day to day matters. A

possible solution to the problem would be to return to the original idea of having some General Meetings in lecture theatres and to institute two different levels of meetings: 'controversial' General Meetings and 'ordinary' General Meetings. The former would have a quorum of five per cent of the student body and the latter, a quorum of, say, 50 students. 'Ordinary' General Meetings would have to have adequate publicity and a petition of 50 students would be able to force it from the 'ordinary' category to the 'controversial' one.

The M.A.S. experiment still continues. It has proved to be extremely successful during times of crisis, but has been less effective during more quiet times. The problems are not necessarily inherent in the basic 'principles that lie behind the system and may be resolved structurally. Whether they will be remains in the hands of the students.

# THE 'CAMPAIGN FOR UNIVERSITY FREEDOM'

At the beginning of 1968 many Monash students were disturbed when one of their members was called before the Discipline Committee to answer the following charge:

'That while a student of this university you did commit acts of misconduct in that you did commit offences against the law of the State of Victoria, namely, that on the 27th day of December 1967 you did smoke Indian hemp and that on the 26th day of January 1968 you were in possession of a drug of addiction, for which offences you were on the thirteenth day of February 1968 convicted in the Court of Petty Sessions of Elsternwick.'

Although the charge did not relate to a political action (and was later dropped), it was clearly the thin edge of the wedge. It was now only a small step to extend the principle of disciplining students for off campus activities to punish again those students who had already incurred the wrath of the State for 'offences' committed in anti-government demonstrations.

*Print* wrote: 'Ultimately (the student) is not being tried by Dr. Matheson and his Kangaroo Court, but by Sir Henry Bolte and our hick state politicians who hold the financial strings that are attached to the gavels of judges on the Discipline Committee'.

The point was emphasized when another student who had given her address as Deakin Hall, Monash University when



she was arrested at a demonstration against the gaoling of a conscientious objector in N.S.W. was rebuked by Dr. Matheson. His letter warned her that she must not involve the 'name' of the University in any such political activity because it would damage its good name. Whilst no penalty was imposed, this laid a precedent for future charges arising out of political activity.

The crunch came on Wednesday, 15th May when *The Age* carried an article headed 'Monash Move on Discipline' which began: 'Monash University is considering introducing moves to punish students for acts of misconduct outside the University', and went on to announce that: 'University sources said the draft was drawn up following Monash's inability last year to discipline students over Pro-National Liberation Front activities . . .' From this it appeared plain that the main intent of the new regulation was to crack down on mounting student anti-war and anti-Government activity.

Student reaction to the news was swift. By lunchtime rallies were being held in the cafeterias and students spent Wednesday afternoon organizing a meeting for the next day.

The next day Thursday, 16th May, a broadsheet entitled '*A Call to Action*' was distributed around campus inviting students to attend a general meeting, called by the S.R.C., to consider the issue.

*Print* described the proposed regulations as 'a sop to forces outside the University . . . designed to make it easier for the Administration to punish students for actions which may offend the "powers that be".'

At 1 o'clock 2000 students gathered in the upstairs foyer for the meeting. They were addressed by many students and

staff members. The meeting voted unanimously 'that "double jeopardy" (punishment for off-campus offences) was intolerable: that attempts by the University to regulate off-campus behaviour of students was intolerable; that a new Discipline Statute is required with clear definitions and specific "rules of conduct" and that . . . 50% of the future discipline committee consist of students.' After these principle motions were passed, the meeting voted overwhelmingly for a sit-in in the Administration Building to present the demands of the meeting to Dr. Matheson. This was the first of the Monash sit-ins, and lasted until late in the afternoon. The press reported the sit-in, but could not evoke 'impressions' of riot, anarchy and violence that they have since associated with all sit-ins and occupations. A new organization called C.U.F. (Campaign for University Freedom) had been set up to co-ordinate activities and to carry on the struggle against the repressive new discipline regulations. Its first broadsheet published the next day said of the sit-in and the mass meeting:

'We, the students have adopted a new principle: that student-administration relations should be conducted on the basis of direct, mass student participation and negotiation, and should not be muffled, misdirected and "conveyed" by "student leaders", S.R.C. "experts" or whatever.'

*Print* (17th May) summed up the consequences of the direct action:

\_ 'Or Else You're Got To Stay All Night' \_

'This decision (to sit-in) reflects the fact that students are no longer prepared to accept sweet promises of "consultation" or S.R.C. waffle about "compromise". We have begun to say that we are entitled to a voice in

running this university and that if we are not given one, we are prepared to take it. If Council once again decided to ignore student opinions. they are going to be confronted by student action. They are going to learn that this is our university, not theirs, and that if we decide not to accept their decisions, then these decisions cannot be implemented. If Matheson attempts to discipline students for non-university .activities next term, he will not be confronted by a protest . . . he will be confronted by a rebellion. If we hold another sit-in, we will not be taking every care to avoid damaging university property or interfering with work and we will not be leaving quietly after debating the issues in order to wait for a reply. as we did yesterday. We will have received our reply if they go ahead with off-campus discipline and we will be entitled to be angry.

IF WE SIT IN WE WILL STAY IN.'

The morning papers featured the sit-in as an interesting event, almost a 'human interest' item, and reported Dr. Matheson's patronizing comment that if he were a student he 'would have marched too'. He 'praised' the sit-in, but he said that students placed a 'wrong interpretation' on the new regulations. The next day, Friday, 17th May, a broadsheet replied:

'Wrong interpretation??? How else can you interpret a statute that says a student may be disciplined for off-campus activity "prejudicial to the university or any of its members". If this wide phrase means anything, it is as we interpreted it . . . it means a crack down on students.

We don't want Matheson to march with us, all we ask is that he stop giving us things to march about: and if he

wants to join C.U.F. he should first stand up to Bolte's political blackmail . . he would find students supporting him 100%.'

Friday was the end of term and students left campus wondering what the outcome of their struggle would be. Dr. Matheson had promised to address a student general meeting early next term, to outline the administration's viewpoint.

On Thursday, 13th June, the meeting was held. The upstairs foyer and dining room were packed out. Dr. Matheson began with some all too familiar words on the 'value of Monash degrees', and then went on to 'assure' students that he would not introduce a statute which could punish students for their off-campus activities. He also added that 'students should not associate the name of the University with their political activities' and was very adamant about this point. At the time students did not see in this attitude any real danger to their political freedoms, but in retrospect it seems that the University, even then, intended to prevent students engaging in open political protest, or at least to penalize those who did.

At the end of the meeting Dr. Matheson was warmly applauded and everyone felt that he had backed down from his original position in the face of mass action, that he was really a nice man. that all would be well. But in believing that Dr. Matheson intended to be guided by student opinion, students were naive and wrong.

To show the attitude of the more politically advanced students of the time, we reprint in full an independent broadsheet entitled ' $0/2 = 0$ '.

'C.U.F. REPRESENTATIVES HAVE CLAIMED THAT IF STUDENTS ARE GIVEN 50% OF THE POSITIONS ON THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE THEN ALL OUR COMPLAINTS ABOUT DISCIPLINE AT THE UNI- VERSITY WILL BE ANSWERED — WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE IS THAT WE WILL GET HALF OF NOTHING, WHICH IS EXACTLY NOTHING.

'Why is the Discipline Committee so powerless? The answer to this question lies outside the University and not within it. Power in our society is exercised by the State and by powerful economic interests. The Administration of Monash University does not have a large place in this power structure. Now in the past Universities have been left pretty much to themselves in Australia but recently the people who run our society have decided that they will have to step in and take over.

Those who control our society don't like its basic values to be questioned—they don't like dissent. They have developed a variety of techniques for keeping people in line, and they are often subtle techniques. In our conformist society dissent has become a dirty word and those who voice their disagreement can quickly find themselves classed as ratbags and troublemakers by their fellows.

However there are some enclaves in this society, there are some areas in which this social pressure is not as powerful as elsewhere. The Universities, and particularly, Monash, make up one of these small areas. Some people at Monash have not been sucked into the system and they've been doing a good deal of dissenting lately.

The State does not like this situation. Conventional means of stopping it have failed. Fines, smears >and police harassment don't seem to work. Students don't have jobs to be sacked from and many of them aren't frightened at the thought of never being able to work for I.B.M. or the Public Service.

Now the State still has plenty of power in reserve to deal with dissenters, but it is brutal naked power—the sort of power that has been used against O'Donnell and Townsend. Our rulers don't want our gaols to be filled to overflowing with political prisoners because that would expose the true nature of the State. In part the power of our rulers rests on the myth that we live in the "Free World" and if they had to put their opponents in gaol that myth would be destroyed. The State needs a more effective, and yet subtle method of dealing with student dissenters.

This is where the University fits in. The State has decided that the University, not the Police or the Army, should be the instrument of repression in the case of students. It would suit the State if the University would do its dirty work for it, and bring the dissenting students into line. IT WOULD SUIT THE STATE EVEN MORE IF STUDENTS WERE TO SHARE THE JOB OF "HATCHET MEN" WITH THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION.

But University Discipline was not designed to punish the political opponents of the State — it was designed basically to prevent cheating at exams and to keep undergraduate rags under control. To suit the purposes of our society's rulers the discipline powers of the University will have to be extended. This is where the new discipline statute and the University's "off-campus" powers come in.

But why should the University be another arm of the State, like the Police or the Army? Now the people who run the University, and particularly the more liberal of them like Dr. Matheson and Professor Andrew, don't want the University to be another arm of the State. Many of them are genuinely devoted to education — they see themselves as scholars and administrators but not as highly educated policemen.

When confronted by the power of the State the University Administration, acting by itself is powerless. The State sees the function of the University to be that of producing solid citizens not protesters and it has made it clear that if the University is to continue to get State finance it must start producing more solid citizens and fewer dissenters. The University Administration, whose prime aim is to keep the University above water financially, have given in. They have paid the price for being allowed to continue to run the University. And they have paid more than once. Each time the price gets higher. It started with the naming of the Ming Wing, then there was the Bolte Degree and now we have the Discipline Statute. The Administration has little power on its own and forced to choose between the government devil and the student deep blue sea it chose the devil.

Now there is no point in merely sharing the powerlessness of the Administration — in taking a seat on the Discipline Committee only to be subject to the same pressures as the Professors who sit there at the moment. We must not join with the apparatus of State Power, we must resist it and even destroy it. Students must not surrender their power to some "prefects" on the Discipline Committee.

Our position must be quite clear:

1. There shall be no off-campus discipline whatsoever.
2. The Administration must draw up a specific Discipline Code for ratification by the students. There must be no vague offences like "misconduct" and conduct detrimental to the interests of the University.

Our fight is with the State not the Administration. If the Administration chooses to become "enforcer" for the State then that is their decision, we must not join them in it. Our job is resist the State and uphold the right to free speech and assembly.'



# DISCIPLINE 1969

After the C.U.F. campaign of 1968, Council had passed this resolution:

'Council accepts in principle the view that in general students should not be disciplined by the University for private activities off the campus.'

(17th June, 1968).

It was seen by students as an assurance that Council had agreed to their demand that nobody should be penalized for off-campus activities. Thus the C.U.F. campaign was concluded. There were no more sit-ins and everything returned to normal. Little did anyone suspect that Admin would completely renege on this assurance and try once again to extend its jurisdiction over students to include off-campus activities.

On the 25th February, 1969 (during the vacation), Dr. Matheson published a report which contained the following resolution passed at a recent Council meeting:

'It is important that the right to terminate the membership of a student who has committed a serious offence be retained and enquiries should be made about dealing with the matter administratively. If necessary the re-writing of the relevant paragraphs of this or some other Statute should be considered.'

The report went on to propose that in accordance with this resolution a Status Committee (as part of the Status of Students Statute) should be set up.

'It is proposed that this Committee may consider among other things the cases of students convicted of criminal offence. It is further proposed that in such cases the Committee may exclude or refuse to admit a student, or may impose conditions on his acceptance.'

The report concluded by saying that the Status Committee would not be concerned with students who, in its opinion, had committed 'political' offences.

Thus it appeared that the Administration had simply transferred off-campus discipline and 'double jeopardy' from one Statute to another. Students objected to this and also to certain clauses in the new draft Discipline An M.A.S. meeting was called on Tuesday, 15th April, Statute. mainly to consider two things: Clause 17.3 of the draft Status of Students Statute which provided (as Matheson's report has said) for a student convicted of a criminal offence to be excluded from Monash, and a censorship clause in the draft Discipline Statute (Clause 1b5), which provided discipline for 'the publication of any false or grossly offensive statement beyond the bounds of fair comment'. The meeting eventually voted to give the Administration seven days to delete Clauses 17.3 and 1b5 from the Statutes and to take some form of direct action if this deadline was not met.

When the seven days were up and the Administration had done nothing to meet student demands (demands which it had claimed to 'accept' in 1968), another M.A.S. meeting was held. With the prospect of direct action imminent many students began to waver and to feel that the Administration should perhaps be given more time. Moderate students proposed that a Student Negotiating Committee (hereafter referred to as the S.N.C.) be set up and direct action postponed. During a fairly stormy debate 'the left-wing opposed this, claiming that the repressiveness of the

Statutes was not accidental or simply a misunderstanding between students and the Administration but the result of deliberate Government pressure to crack down on the radical protest movement. (All university statutes must be approved by the State Government before they become law.) The majority of the meeting agreed with the view of the moderates and consequently the S.N.C. was set up and the deadline was extended by two weeks. This was the start of a long series of protracted negotiations interspersed with more and more direct action as students became more and more exasperated with the failure of negotiations to achieve anything.

## **5,000 SUPPORT M.A.S. DEMANDS**

Two weeks had passed and the time allotted by the meeting of 21st April was up. Still the Administration refused to compromise. On Tuesday, 6th May, an M.A.S. meeting voted to take action against the Administration.

We reprint extracts from the broadsheet *Discipline at Monash*—

' ... the administration is best summarised by quoting N.S.W.'s Premier Askin (of "run the bastards over" fame) when he said. "if the university doesn't discipline the students. the state will." Professor Legge paraphrased this into more discreet academic terms when he said in the course of negotiations (with the S.N.C.) that if the "outside community" felt that Council was abrogating its powers to the students then they might decide that the university was not capable of running its own affairs. . . .

The line Bolte and Bowen take is that students are becoming too radical and restless and the University authorities had better do something to tighten control

on behalf of the authorities. The line of Westfold. Matheson and Legge is that they had better comply with this or else the State authorities will intervene and thus wreck their precious "academic autonomy" (not to mention the myth that universities are anything but a part of the present social system). Both are agreed that it is time to crack down on radical students.

The only difference between this (Statute) and what students objected to last year is that instead of calling it by an honest name—expulsion for private off-campus activities, this provocation was labelled "reconsideration of status to protect the university" and a "non-political" tag was added to the criminal offences involved. Even if students were not concerned with the broader issue of whether a man should be punished twice for the same crime and were solely worried about the possibility of students being expelled for demonstrating illegally (something that has been seriously proposed in Parliament) the new clause would be completely unacceptable. There is in fact no such animal as a "political offence" so there would be nothing to prevent the University from deciding to exclude a student who had been convicted of "assault" (being kicked by a policeman), "assault by biting" (being kicked in the mouth by a policeman), or "insulting words" (commenting on the fact that one had been kicked in the mouth by a policeman). This would not be done for any political reason, such as wanting to clamp down on demonstrations but simply in order to protect the University's members and property from persons who might be prone to violence. After all, there is nothing political about an assault! (Even if it is usually the other way round!)

If 17.3 was the only issue on which deadlock had been reached there would be ample grounds for immediate action. However, the Discipline Statute itself contains a whole series of clauses that completely eliminate the Statute's own elaborate safeguards. It is misconduct for example to disobey any "reasonable" order. This has been watered down to orders designed to prevent other acts of misconduct or the commission of criminal offences. Nevertheless, we could be disciplined if we were ordered not to hold a general meeting today and consider the idea of sitting-in (which would be misconduct) and we still held the meeting but voted against the sit-in. We could also be disciplined for collecting N.L.F. aid on campus. Apart from this, Council can by regulation, define other things to constitute misconduct and get you that way. The Drafting Committee has absolutely refused to even consider the idea of M.A.S. approval being needed before Council can introduce any such regulations. Instead they have offered "consultation"—the sort of consultation we got on the parking and are getting now! There is of course adequate provision for observers to be present at Discipline Committee meetings, although they can be thrown out at any time and may not publish an uncensored report.

Finally, just in case someone manages to get an accidental acquittal against all the odds, there is provision for the prosecution to have a right of appeal to the Discipline Committee, and possibly, to Council. This makes the rest of the Statute just plain funny but the Drafting Committee has' not agreed to withdraw it. Instead they will think it over and tell us their attitude on Thursday. The same goes for a student majority on the Discipline Committee.

At today's general meeting there will be moves for a token sit-in to strengthen our bargaining position. The Labor Club considers there is no point in bargaining further with dishonest people within the framework of a dishonest Statute. *Student discipline should be entirely in the hands of students and we should draft our own M.A.S. Statute on discipline instead of trying to amend theirs.* Stronger action than a sit-in should be taken to have the present draft withdrawn and this principle adopted.'

Published by the Monash Labor Club.

The sit-in which occurred after the meeting was supported by the S.N.C. too. The moderate broadsheet New Front expressed the view of the S.N.C. before the meeting that 'the majority of the ad hoc committee (S.N.C.) which has a representative from each political club agrees that a sit-in at the administration building should be staged after today's general meeting . . . the sit-in is essential if we are to convince these people that the student body is prepared to stand firm on its demand for a greater say in the organization and decision-making of this University . . . ACTION IS REQUIRED NOW. We ask all students to attend today's mass meeting and support the sit-in'.

An overwhelming majority at the M.A.S. meeting supported immediate action against the administration and were only divided as to the duration of the sit-in, overnight or only for several hours. Eventually the meeting was adjourned to the administration building so that the 'occupation or sit-in' discussion could continue there.

So at about 2.10 p.m. students marched out of the union and over to the administration building only to discover that all the doors had been locked to prevent the demonstration.

If the acting Vice-Chancellor, Westfold, was hoping either to discourage the sit-in, or to provoke the students to storm the building and thus lay themselves open to charges of violence, he must have been disappointed. For the students simply climbed up the outside of the administration building, entered through a window and opened the front doors from inside. (The *Herald* still managed to describe all this as 'storming of the administration building'.)

Only the foyer of the building was occupied and no one made any attempt to enter offices or physically disrupt the work of the administrative staff. However Westfold, reacting with what he thought was a clever counter-attack cancelled all lectures and with a dramatic flourish called on the whole university to assemble outside the administration building. Doubtless, he expected that in the atmosphere of impending 'threat to the university', he could get this enormous assembly of students to vote overwhelmingly against the radicals thus isolating them and forestalling further development of a campaign against the new statutes. However he miscalculated. As it turned out, the student body was not so keen in supporting the administration.

By 3.20 p.m. students were pouring toward the administration building from all directions, and by 3.30 p.m. the 'area between the pond and the library, and the administration building was packed. Estimates of the number of people present ranged from 5000 (*Sun*) to 7000 (*Lot's Wife*).

At 3.30 p.m. the meeting was due to begin but procedure for conducting it had not yet been decided. There was pressure from right-wingers to just discuss the sit-in itself. The administration would, of course, have been relieved if concern about the draft Statutes could be deflected into disapproval of the demonstration methods. A spokesman

from the sit-in stated that they would only vacate the building if the meeting discussed the reasons for the action before deciding whether or not they supported it. Ken Murphy (Chairman of M.A.S.) took the Chair and explained the situation to the waiting students. He then called for a show of hands on the proposal that the meeting should discuss the issues and then the sit-in. A large majority voted in favour of this proposal and so the meeting got underway. Students listened to the debate that followed with deep interest. A vote was taken on each issue after it had been outlined by one speaker from each side. The first issue was 17.3.

The speaker in favour of 17.3 justified it in terms of the University needing protection from people with a tendency to commit crimes. Speaking against it, students expressed the view that (a) it is wrong to discriminate against people who have been convicted of a crime. Criminals should be rehabilitated, not rejected. The university should not be permitted to exclude people who are legally free in the outside community; (b) there had recently been a lot of pressure on the university to 'crack down' on student radicalism; the R.S.L. had called for the exclusion of students arrested at demonstrations. Many anti-government activists acquired criminal records containing convictions for 'assaults', 'assault by kicking,' 'riotous behaviour', etc., and despite university promises, it seemed likely that government pressure would be brought to bear on the authorities to use 17.3 to exclude students such as these.

The vote was overwhelmingly against 17.3, only a handful voted in favour of its retention. Thus M.A.S. policy on this was reaffirmed by a clear majority of students.

On the question of censorship (1b5) and student majority on the Discipline Committee, the voting was roughly the same.



The other issue was the M.A.S. veto over regulations which was supported less overwhelmingly but still by a clear majority.

After reaffirming M.A.S. policy on all these issues the meeting voted that the sit-in should end, negotiations should continue on the basis of this new show of strength and that another M.A.S. meeting be held on the following Monday to consider the progress of these and whether further direct action was necessary. The demonstration left the building feeling that their action had been more successful than they could ever have hoped for. Now that a majority of students had agreed with M.A.S. demands the campaign had a real chance of success. All Vice-Chancellor Westfold had achieved was a reprieve from direct action; instead of isolating the radicals, his action had led to further isolation of the administration. The 'silent majority' had at last taken a stand . . . on the side of the radicals. (It just wasn't Westfold's day.)

Wednesday, 7th May (day after the meeting of 5000 and sit-in) saw an abortive attempt by a small number of medical students to disassociate the faculty from the decisions of the '5000'. Ten suitably aggrieved medicine students approached the acting Dean of Medicine (Professor Schofield) who agreed to cancel lectures at 12.15 p.m. for the meeting. (Can you imagine a Dean cancelling lectures for a meeting called by the left?) Accordingly the meeting was held. But the expected 'ritual denunciation' never occurred. Try as they might, the conveners of the meeting gained no support. Consequently, members of the generally conservative Medical Faculty left the meeting feeling a lot more sympathetic to M.A.S. policies than previously. As *Print* said next day, 'One can only hope that administration will continue to cancel lectures so that students may participate in the running of the University.'

## **WESTFOLD DOES A MAIL-OUT**

The administration was in a pretty sticky position. Now that a clear majority of all students had asked for the deletion of 17.3, it was hard to justify its retention. In the past Admin had been able to brush over M.A.S. demands as only representative of a 'small minority'. This was no longer possible. However, Westfold and Co. were still determined to stand firm. The important thing now was to keep the students negotiating and to stop the majority of moderate students moving closer to the radicals and direct action. From this point on Admin was to concern itself more and more with isolating the militant activists from the more moderate majority on the basis that these people were a 'threat to the university', 'manipulators', and so on. If only direct action could be prevented then Admin could 'sit-tight', and hold out on the Discipline and Status of Students Statutes.

On Thursday, 8th May, forty-eight hours after meeting 5000, Westfold swung the Administration propaganda machine into action and mailed out a printed letter to the home address of every Monash student. It was a desperate attempt to persuade students to accept the statutes. It also attacked the students who had participated in the sit-in which had culminated in Tuesday's mass meeting and said that the S.N.C. had committed a 'serious dereliction of duty' in supporting Tuesday's action . . . 'it would seem impossible for the Drafting Committee to carry on further discussions with transitory "representatives" who are happy to accept negotiations only so long as they agree with their point, resorting immediately to intimidation to enforce their views in cases where their arguments have not been persuasive'. What he failed to point out, of course, was that he himself had every intention of enforcing his 'views' if his arguments to the students were 'not persuasive' . The only difference

would be that he could take institutionalized 'direct action' by simply over-riding majority opinion and bringing the statutes into legislation.

On Friday, 9th May, the S.N.C. met with the administration Drafting Committee. On the questions of 17.3, M.A.S. veto over regulations, student majority on Discipline Committee, and definition of misconduct, the S.N.C.'s arguments were not persuasive. However, agreement was reached over the 'censorship' and Administration agreed to drop clause 1b5 of the Discipline Statute . . . probably as a sop to students hoping that they would calm down over what was now the main issue, 17.3. It was by now quite clear that mere 'rational argument' from students was never going to persuade the authorities to drop their 'right' to exclude 'criminal elements' from the university. Complete deadlock had been reached with the mass of students on one side and the Administration on the other.

### **ABORTIVE M.A.S. MEETING**

Monday, 12th May, was the day of the meeting called for by the 5000. *Print* stated the Labor Club's view of what the Statute was all about:

'Amidst all the accusations and counter accusations, lies and half truths, mass mailed Westfolian letters, and so forth, one point seems to have been missed, WHY HAS THE STATUTE BEEN DRAFTED ANYWAY?

It is not because the Administration is worried about the pilfering of library books or rapists on campus debauching freshettes. If the Statute really dealt with those things, Administration would be perfectly happy to let students draft their own statute and administer it themselves. But, in fact. Administration regards a

student-drafted statute as out of the question and one of the points on which negotiations have broken down is the refusal of the Administration to accept a student majority on the Discipline Committee. IF THE STATUTE WERE BEING DRAWN UP FOR OUR BENEFIT, ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT OBJECT TO US RUNNING IT.

For whose benefit is the Statute being drawn up? The answer to that question may be found in Bowen's statement about dissent, in Bob Askin's statement on the anti-militarist demonstration at Sydney University, in the string of statements that hangman, Henry Bolte, and his henchman, Rylah, have been making ever since students first protested against the hanging of Ryan. All of them have said that dissent must stop because it is becoming effective. All have said on various occasions that dissenting students might have to be excluded from the University either by direct expulsion or by the withdrawal of scholarships. In other words, the discipline statute is not aimed at stopping us from pinching library books. IT IS AIMED AT REPRESSING POLITICAL ACTION.'

An information table was set up in the Union to distribute the many broadsheets which had been produced. Many faculty groups had brought out their own broadsheets and several more general broadsheets were also available. Most of them listed reasons for opposing the new statutes, some suggested further negotiations, and others, like Print, claimed that direct action was the only possible course for the campaign to take. It became clear during the course of the morning that the main dispute which would be fought out at the meeting would be between the moderates who still tended to believe that reasoned arguments could convince Admin (or at least wished that it could), and the

radicals who felt that argument could have no effect on the Drafting Committee.

'Last week's sit-in forced them to concede about as much as they can on the major issues. Further concessions would deprive them of their means of controlling student dissent and this would be unacceptable to the Government and big industrialists who between them control the funds of the university . . . Westfold cannot drop them (obnoxious clauses) or alter them in any meaningful way WITHOUT LOSING THE WHOLE POINT OF HIS DISCIPLINE STATUTE. This is why it is pointless to talk about negotiations. THERE IS SIMPLY NOTHING TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT. Either we accept their statute with its inherent restrictions on our freedom or we take further action to gain by strength that which is no longer possible to gain by strength of logic alone.'

*Print.*

The mass meeting was a complete abortion and resulted in no decision being taken on the vital question of negotiation or direct action. It was too large to be held inside and so was held in the drizzling rain outside. When the vote came, the Chairman called for a division and the meeting promptly became chaotic.

A recently formed right-wing vigilante group calling itself *Alliance for Protection of the University*, stationed itself around and on the Chairman's rostrum and quite openly threatened him, tried to seize the microphone, and physically prevented anyone they presumed to be a left-winger from climbing on the truck to speak over the microphone or to the Chairman. Eventually the Chairman abandoned his desk and vacated the Chair. It was promptly seized by the Warden of the Union, a non-member of M.A.S., who had no business interfering with the meeting, but who

proceeded to make a long speech on the evils of sit-ins and occupations. He then called for a vote on whether or not 'to sabotage negotiations' (!) Finally, the Chairman, Warwick Nelson, retrieved the Chair and unilaterally closed the meeting against five motions of dissent and after no decision had been taken.

The failure of this large student general meeting to achieve anything concrete took the heat out of the campaign temporarily. Many students were quite naturally disillusioned with student meetings and did not become re-involved in the struggle until half way through second term. Since there were only three days of the term left, Admin relaxed, hoping that the three weeks 'breather' would dissipate student opposition. Wednesday, 14th May saw a smaller M.A.S. meeting where radicals did not move for direct action on the grounds that the vacation was now too close. Instead it was resolved to elect a new negotiating committee and continue negotiations 'as long as they remain fruitful' (which was presumably supposed to mean 'over vacation').

## **TERM 2**

As expected, second term began with a lull in the struggle over the draft statutes, but this was partly due to a spate of political activity around off-campus issues. Albert Langer was on trial on the County Court before a judge and jury charged with the criminal offence of 'riot', 'inciting people to riot' and 'obstructing a police officer in the course of his duty'. This was the third time Langer had faced a court on these charges which had been first laid over ten months ago as a result of the 1968 4th July protest. Alarmed at the success of the demonstration and anxious to nip militancy in the bud, the authorities clamped down hard.

When Langer's trial came up in June, 1969, Monash students followed it with interest and solidarity (it ran for about two weeks, resulted in a divided jury and was rescheduled for August, 1969). Many students saw connections between moves by the State authorities to single out radical leaders for charges of criminal offences, and moves by the Monash administration to exclude students who had been convicted of these. If 17.3 were allowed to remain in the Status of Students Statute it would be an ideal way to get rid of any radical who was active enough to be noticed by police. arrested and convicted of a criminal offence. Moreover, students would be too intimidated to demonstrate in case they were arrested, convicted and subsequently excluded from the university.

An M.A.S. meeting was held early in second term where students overwhelmingly supported motions declaring that the trial was an attempt to stifle political dissent and to intimidate opponents to the government. This meeting also voted to hold a demonstration outside the court.

While the Langer trial was still continuing, students were organizing on and off campus for the anti-U.S. imperialist demonstration. Several busloads of Monash students attended the demonstration which turned out to be even more militant than its predecessor and, resulted in large numbers of students being convicted of the usual 'criminal' offences, and in calls from the R.S.L. for University administrations to take steps to rid the universities of these elements.

## **STAFF MEMBERS DECIDE**

While students were concerning themselves with the Langer trial and 4th July, Admin was busy holding staff meetings in order to ascertain staff opinion on the new statutes . . . 17.3

in particular. After the meeting of 'the 5000', its attitude had been, 'well, perhaps the students do oppose 17.3 but anyway they are only one section of the University (and much too idealistic, immature and susceptible to manipulation), staff opinion is sure to be more sympathetic and if we can get them to show their support for 17.3, then the students will feel too isolated to carry on (perhaps).'

Thus in the first weeks of term the staff were brought into the campaign with a series of staff meetings initiated by the administration. At each one a member of the administration Drafting Committee spoke on the university's right to exclude people convicted of criminal offences and a member of the S.N.C. spoke against this. You can guess what happened! The staff also turned out to be 'much too idealistic, immature and susceptible to manipulation'. Each meeting without exception voted against 17.3. The situation was then that approximately 5000 students and a majority of staff had opposed it, but still the administration insisted on retaining 17.3 in the Statute. It would have appeared far more logical and reasonable had they at this stage decided to concede the university demands. If their only reason for attempting to introduce 17.3 had been to 'protect' the members of the university then why, when most members clearly did not want this protection, were they trying so hard to persist with the clause? Many students asked themselves this question and began to wonder whether some of the things Print had been saying about the authorities had been correct.

## **NEGOTIATIONS . . . The Sounds of Silence . . .**

In the meantime *Print* continued its call for more action and less talk. It was quite clear that negotiations were no longer 'fruitful'. In fact, they appeared to have come to a halt. The majority of the S.N.C. members still wanted to give Admin



more time to work out new proposals. (Moderate student leaders were becoming more and more nervous at the thought of direct action. It appeared that the Admin's bluster was definitely having an effect on these people who only nine weeks ago had supported an occupation or sit-in.)

Exasperated by the fact that, despite all this 'reasoned discourse', 17.3 and most of the other objectionable clauses remained, the meeting voted to give Admin only fourteen more days in which to drop 17.3 from the Statute and to formulate definite proposals regarding the students demand for veto over the introduction of the new disciplinary regulations.

On the day after this meeting Admin unilaterally cut off all negotiations under the threat of direct action, for apparently the Professorial Board had been instructed never to negotiate under the threat of direct action. This instruction had never been conveyed to the students. *Print* said:

'Admin has always regarded the right to exclude students on non-academic grounds as a non-negotiable demand. The history of negotiations over past years has shown that there never was a chance of compromise over these two contradictory attitudes. **SOMEBODY MUST BACK DOWN.** Direct action is the only weapon students have to force the administration to back down and that is why negotiations were broken off as soon as we threatened to use it. Admin also finds a two week deadline irksome because it interferes with their strategy. They have no intention of granting student demands on 17.3 and they want to keep on talking. They do not want the fact that negotiations are useless to become clear until third term. In third term or during the vacation they could then pass 17.3 into statutory

law over student's heads, knowing that we could not use our weapon, direct action, close to the exams.'

## **BASTILLE DAY**

There was an angry reaction to the Administration's cessation of negotiations and left wing students attempted to call an emergency M.A.S. meeting about it. However, the Administrative Executive of M.A.S. refused to call one (despite a petition with the right number of signatures) on the grounds that the previous M.A.S. meeting had voted to wait fourteen days before having another meeting on the question. When the M.A.S. bureaucrats stubbornly held to their position despite arguments from many students that there had been an important and unforeseen change in the situation, the Labor Club decided to call a rally of its own to occur on Monday, 14th July, (Bastille Day), which was also the day on which the July Council meeting was held. A leaflet *Direct Action or Nothing* was distributed around the campus all morning to inform students of the rally and of the fact that direct action would be proposed at it.

Feeling among the students who attended the rally was that Administration's action was tantamount to a denial of the right to demonstrate. Negotiations were all very well when both sides operated from a position of strength but at Monash it appeared that Admin believed that one side should be strong while the other should be kept in a position of servility. One speaker drew an analogy between the situation at Monash and a workers' struggle. Workers who want a better deal and go on strike about it are always bitterly attacked and slandered by their boss for being 'irresponsible', 'resorting to industrial blackmail' and told to solve their problems at the conference table or 'go to arbitration'. So long as the workers are content to merely file a log of claims, the employers are sitting pretty. As soon as

they stop talking and appealing to the goodness of the bosses' heart, then the balance of power begins to change. Only then do negotiations have any meaning. Otherwise the boss remains in the position of absolute power just by virtue of being 'boss'.

The rally eventually voted to move over to the Administration building where the Council meeting was to be held. About 100 students entered the building and waited for the Council members to arrive. At 3.00 p.m. 'important persons' were seen approaching the Administration building. The students in the building made an application to Sir Douglas Menzies, Chancellor of Monash, for a delegation to be admitted to the Council meeting so that the purpose of the demonstration could be explained. Menzies, shocked by this insubordination and by his meeting with real, live radical Monash students went slightly red in the face and said that never before had students been allowed into a Council meeting and he had no intention of changing this fine tradition. When students continued arguing with him he started lecturing the crowd. Beginning with the classic phrase . . . 'When I was your age . . .' he went on to explain how he had pulled himself up 'by his own bootstraps' and was worthy of great respect on this basis. Matheson stood by with a look of pained embarrassment while Menzies was performing and seemed almost afraid to interrupt, despite the fact that Sir Douglas's behaviour appeared to be contributing greatly to the confusion and disorder in the building. People were collapsing with laughter and Council was fast losing its all important aura of dignity and omnipotence. Finally Matheson chipped in to threaten that if students didn't stop congregating around the door of the Council Chamber he would cancel the meeting. A student then spoke through the megaphone to suggest that the whole demonstration move away from the door to the other side of the building, (leaving behind them

the three students who had been nominated as the delegation), so that there could be no accusation of a mass storming or blockading of the Council chamber. The students immediately complied. As the door was about to be opened, Menzies rushed over, grabbed the megaphone and in an apparent fit of pique announced that the meeting was cancelled! This ended Bastille Day. None of the students involved could even have suspected that the next day's newspapers were to appear describing the day's relatively insignificant events as 'riots' bringing Monash to the 'brink of crisis'.

## **COUNTER ATTACK — THE ESCALATION**

By 6.00 p.m. on Bastille Day perturbed newspapers were describing the gory events. Dr. Matheson was interviewed and said he was 'disturbed' by the events. However, all would be well he assured, speedy justice would be meted out to the 'troublemakers' in the forms of university discipline. The announcement that the protestors would be disciplined was a bombshell to the radicals. At Monash it was almost a tradition to enter the Administration building during times of mass dissatisfaction.

Bastille Day was a turning point for the authorities. From then on they appear to have quite consciously changed their tactics. Instead of trying to win support from the mass of students for the statutes, they began to take the offensive. No longer were they content to merely defend their own position as regards 17.3; they now began, in an organized and efficient way, to launch an attack on the militant student leaders in the hope of being able to isolate them from the mass of more moderate students and thus destroy the united front which had grown up against the new statutes. While they talked about 'negotiations',

'reasoned discourse', 'rational debate', it was clear that they too now saw things in terms of a battle.

## **MATHESON FIRES OPENING SHOTS**

On Tuesday, 15th July, Dr. Matheson called his own rally of the whole university complete with public address system, rostrum and most important, prepublicity in the morning papers. After enthusiastically adding fuel to the media's anti-Monash fire with several choice statements about Monday's events such as 'I was forced to send the women staff home for their own safety' (sheer panic-mongering with a bit of emotive male chauvinism thrown in) he went on to read out a long speech based upon a report he had prepared for Council on his recent four months 'study tour' to overseas universities. It began with the following statement:

`To make a series of visits to universities in different parts of the world in 1969 is to undertake a journey which has some nightmare qualities of science fiction: the triffids are springing up everywhere and no-one knows how to keep them in check, still less how to cut them down. But this is not a nightmare from which one can wake into a sane and orderly world. Everywhere the reality is of universities under attack, in chaos closed, or open only under police protection.'

From here he went on to tell horror stories about overseas student rebellion. Much repetition of the words 'violence', 'coercion', 'disruption', etc., served to paint a rather graphic picture of the senseless disruption and disorder which was supposedly intended to strike fear into the hearts of all decent, peace-loving Monash students. Underlying it was an appeal to Monash patriotism in the form of 'don't let this happen to Monash', 'Preserve this great university', 'stop the militants before it is too late,' etc.

A large part of this proclamation was devoted to reading out a 'Resolution on Rights and Responsibilities' which had been passed by the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences (staff). This resolution declared 'violence and interference with freedom of speech and movement' to be 'unacceptable' (whose 'freedom', whose 'speech' and 'movement'?) and went on to equate 'direct action' as amounting in essence to the above.

The student struggle at Harvard was described as 'violent', 'disruptive', 'coercive', 'intimidatory' and 'contrary to freedom of speech'. It was left to *Print* next day to put Matheson's judgement in context by explaining just what the Harvard students had been struggling about.

'What actually did happen at Harvard, and what Dr. Matheson did not choose to tell Monash students, was that students at Harvard demanded that military training should not be permitted on campus or credited toward degrees. They also demanded that the university administration break off its links with the C.I.A. and Defence Department and cancel all research contracts with them (which were many). In particular, students objected to war research which was going on, one particularly obnoxious example being the fact that the Chemistry department was doing specialized research into "better" formulas for napalm. During a mass occupation in support of these demands, files which directly proved the university's secret contracts with the C.I.A. and the Defence Department were stolen by students . . . In his speech Dr. Matheson mentioned the theft of these files as a heinous crime contrary to "academic freedom" . . . he did not mention the content of the files.'

After he had finished speaking on the dangers of student activism and how students should avoid 'enforcing' their ideas on others by engaging in group demonstrations such as occupations, and that Monash must remain a centre of 'free debate' with no one view-point dominating, that 'as an institution' it must remain 'neutral' and that 'reasoned discourse' was the way to solve the problem, he stepped down from his rostrum, categorically refused to answer questions from the floor .and when students attempted to speak through the microphone, ordered that the power be cut off.

The next day, the *Sun* and other newspapers gave much space to Matheson's accusations of 'violence' etc., and in particular played up a suggestion (from Matheson himself) that the 'financial tap' to Monash 'might be turned off' if the unrest continued.

The press was to become a powerful ally for Dr. Matheson in his battle to discredit the radicals over the next few months. A preview of this was given by the relative ease with which the media managed to turn the Council demonstration into a 'riot'. There seems little doubt that most of the newspaper reading, radio listening, T.V. watching public, probably believed that the students of Monash were 'abusing their privileges', 'wasting tax-payers' money' and generally behaving in a disgusting way. Certainly an increasing number of Monash students began to develop hostile feelings towards the militants as was demonstrated at the M.A.S. meeting which was called to consider the recent events. Though this meeting voted overwhelmingly to oppose the proposed discipline trials and to organize direct action if Dr. Matheson carried out his threat, it decided to disassociate M.A.S. from the Council demonstration itself. Towards the end of the meeting the question of negotiations came up with the moderates and right-wingers uniting

successfully to move that the two week deadline be set aside so that the Administration would re-open negotiations.

### **DESTRUCTION, VIOLENCE, DISRUPTION, COME TO MONASH (or Farm Week Fun '69)**

From 20th to 24th July the normal processes of the university were severely disrupted by '*Farm Week*' (traditional Monash 'rag week'). \$1340 worth of damage was done to University property, students walking between the Ming Wing and the union were thrown into the pond, one university worker was injured by a water bomb which was hurled from the top of the Ming Wing, a class of visiting school children were attacked by a hoard of flour-bombing youths, motor bikes were ridden down the corridors of the Science Block, and students conducted a water fight using fire hoses in the law building. M.A.S. asked the Administration to take action against the students involved in the more serious of these 'pranks'. Admin however merely set up a 'Committee of Investigation' to hear 'evidence' about the misdemeanours of Farm Week. Eventually several students were disciplined and received token fines. Despite the fact that more damage was done in financial terms during Farm Week than in any Monash political activity (approximately \$1300 more), that ordinary students 'quietly going about their own business' were sometimes physically prevented from doing so, and at times whole areas of the university were thrown into chaos, there were no press reports about Monash louts wasting public money, or 'dragging the university into dirt'.

The Public Affairs Committee however, passed the following motion:

'That the Public Affairs Committee notes with dismay and concern the actions of a small section of the



university student body apparently manipulated by extremist elements and not authorised by any M.A.S. meeting who, with the connivance of certain responsible persons have engaged a systematic campaign of destruction, violence and intimidation. The unlawful assembly of rioting mobs who took over the university grounds on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, damaged university property, threw members of the university into the ornamental pond can only lower the value of Monash degrees and is contrary to the revolutionary spirit of the University. Public Affairs Committee affirms its demand that such a debacle be never allowed to recur.

In the view of the Drafting Committee's determination to protect students from the totally irrelevant activities of their fellows outside the university grounds, regardless of student's expressed wish not to be protected, we have no doubt that firm action will be taken to protect students from the real danger within the university and thus end for all time the ignoble suspicion that action is only taken over political matters.

While not wishing to aggravate tensions further we feel that the university authorities should have taken steps to send all female staff home, cancel all lectures, issue appropriate manifestos, give press releases. etc.. as they have done with such fortitude when the university has been less threatened than now.'

*Free Speech*, published by the well known D.L.P. Club member, Mark Lapirow, hailed Farm Week as 'a really good honest way of letting off steam': 'Heaven help us if we had to be serious all the time! I am proud to testify that six Monash Democrats participated in the toilet cramming.' (*Free Speech* No. 25 1969).

On Monday, 27th July the cancelled Council meeting was held on campus. About ten students went to the Administration building with a written request that a delegation of students be admitted to the meeting. The letter was delivered to the Council meeting and the students waited outside for an answer. After an hour and a half waiting and still no reply, the students gave up and left the building. A photographer was waiting outside to photograph each student as he left.

## **ADMIN STARTS THE PERSECUTION**

On Wednesday, 29th July, eight students received summonses ordering them to appear before the Discipline Committee to answer charges arising out of Bastille Day. On Thursday, 30th July, a rally of about 200 students went to confront Dr. Matheson and ask why he had laid the charges in direct opposition to M.A.S. policy, why the eight were to be charged under the old Discipline Statute which was universally regarded as repressive, and why they were to be charged with 'disobeying a reasonable order', a charge of distinctly repressive nature. Matheson was not in the Administration building and lo and behold students discovered that he was lunching with a guest, Clark Kerr, President of the Berkeley University at the time of the Free Speech movement there. Matheson's close association with Kerr threw a revealing light upon his real attitudes toward discipline and punishment for student's off campus activities. In his Study Leave Report to Council Matheson had said:

`In America where our journey started, the first shot (not then literally) to be heard around the world was fired in Berkeley in 1964 when a dispute about the freedom of advocacy flared up into a real confrontation which eventually caused the resignation of President Clark Kerr.

'During the course of this disputation . . . which is still going . . . the effectiveness of passive resistance, the sit-in was discovered anew, probably without due acknowledgement to Ghandi and other early exponents; the merits of obscenity, sacrilege and so on, as a means of goading the Administration into reprisals which could be represented as unjust, became manifest; the ease with which some faculty members could be induced to support the Cause in the belief that they were supporting academic freedom was observed.' Here, as with the Harvard case, Matheson seemed reluctant to draw attention to the issues which were at stake, doubtless realizing that if the struggles of the two American universities were clearly understood by the students of Monash, then his whole thesis' of the nature of student unrest would be exposed and rejected as nothing more than emotive hogwash.

The battle at Berkeley parallels that at Monash in a way that must have been embarrassing for a man like Matheson. Kerr's administration in 1964 behaved much as Matheson's in 1968. Kerr, like Matheson, took the stand that students' off-campus activities were the concern of the university and carried this even further by banning any individual club advocating support for an off-campus movement. The only political comment which was permitted on campus was that which gave arguments both for and against a particular viewpoint and which did not advocate any form of political action (on or off campus). Students who set up tables organizing for a demonstration against racism were disciplined and this is what sparked off the whole campaign.

Matheson's 1968 attempt to discipline students who did 'naughty' things off campus and his attempt during 1969 to introduce legislation which could exclude politically active students smacked very strongly of Kerr's concept of a 'neutral' university and his consequent attack on the

students' Free Speech movement. Radical students saw Matheson's close association and obvious friendship with Clark Kerr as an indication that he was probably in basic political agreement with Kerr and would if possible attempt to strike out any effective political rebellion at Monash.

### **M.A.S. OCCUPIES THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

On Monday, 4th August, M.A.S. meeting voted to occupy the Administration building, 'until we receive a favourable reply to our demands'. These demands were:—

- (a) that the charges should be dropped.
- (b) that if this is impossible, an open hearing instead of the proposed closed one should be held.
- (c) that student demands on 17.3 should be accepted.

The trial was to begin at 10.00 a.m. the next day, so there was a sense of urgency about the whole situation. This time students entered the Administration building knowing that they would be staying all night. What had started off as a campaign against certain clauses in the new statute had now been escalated by the Administration's intransigence in the face of majority opposition into a full scale confrontation. Matheson had thrown down the gauntlet to students in his decision to discipline those who took direct action instead of continuing with meaningless negotiations and this challenge had been taken up by M.A.S. Matheson was faced with only two alternatives — to accept students demands on 17.3 and drop the discipline charges or confront student dissatisfaction head on and hope to ride the storm with the help of an organized publicity campaign against the militants. He chose the latter and thus was Monash plunged into a fresh wave of vicious press attacks and attempts to aggravate public opinion.

Only the foyer section of the building was occupied and no-one made any attempt to enter offices and disrupt the administrative work which was still going on. (In this sense it was not a real occupation . . . only a show of strength potential.) A duplicating machine and typewriter belonging to the Labor Club were brought to the building and a Publications Committee set up, so that broadsheets explaining M.A.S. demands could be produced. At the same time an Occupation Steering Committee was elected to co-ordinate all activities and sub-committees for food, sleeping, cleaning up, poster production and leaflet distribution were organized. One section of the building was designated a 'discussion area' while others were set aside for sleeping and work. All evening the building was a beehive of activity and argument. Leaflets, posters and chalk signs were produced, duplicating lessons were organized so that individual students could put out their own leaflets, collections were taken up to buy paper, ink and food. P.A.C. met, supported the occupation and agreed to organize a mass student rally to be held inside the building at 10.00 a.m. next morning (coinciding with the beginning of the trial).

By 10.00 a.m. next morning the building was packed with students. Supporters who had not been prepared to stay all night were returning. Others came out of curiosity. At 10.15 a.m. the three Deans and sub-Deans who were to 'try' the eight' arrived and entered the Council Chambers where the trial was to be held. At the same time the rally began. Most students there felt that since the Administration was obviously not going to drop the charges the most realistic demand was for an 'open hearing'. (Administration had refused anyone apart from a small number of approved 'observers' to view the proceedings.) The eight accused students were asked to go into the hearing and put a formal request for the hearing to be opened. As expected the Discipline Committee categorically refused this demand on

the grounds that students might disrupt the hearing. When asked if whether it would be possible to have the proceedings broadcast on the closed circuit T.V., the Committee admitted the facilities were available but refused the request on the grounds that the cameras might 'distract' them.

The crowd outside the council chambers was pretty angry at the refusal to grant even their most minor demands and the atmosphere became quickly more militant. It was decided however, to spend the morning organizing an M.A.S. meeting which was to be held at lunchtime outside the Administration building and to postpone direct action against the discipline trial until after this meeting.

All the morning the building was crowded with students. The occupation had developed into the biggest student action Monash had so far seen.

At 1.00 p.m. a rather chaotic M.A.S. meeting outside the Administration building reaffirmed all M.A.S. demands overwhelmingly. The question of the occupation itself was not even raised; everyone just assumed that it had to go on. When the meeting finished more students went into the building and joined the occupiers instead of going back to lectures.

Students clustered around both entrances to the Council Chambers, everyone was by now determined to defy the Committee and 'open the hearing' anyway. A rather ungrammatical chant of 'we want in', 'we want in!' went up. Finally at about 3.15 p.m. an attendant opened the door to let one of the accused enter. As he walked s-l-o-w-l-y through, the crowd surged forward and through with him. As the protesters began taking their seats in the now opened hearing, Professor Manton (chairman of the Committee)

sprang angrily to his feet and ordered them immediately to leave the room. When no-one left and students continued to flow into the forbidden room, he announced that the hearing had been adjourned until some time in the coming vacation and then stomped out of the room. Ten students were later charged with 'acting in a manner likely to disrupt a meeting of the Discipline Committee', 'failing to obey an order to leave the Council Chamber' and 'entering the Council room during a meeting of the Discipline Committee without permission'.

Two hundred and sixty students remained in the Council Chamber until about 6.00 p.m. when they left after having conducted a closed trial of the university authorities and found them guilty. This discipline committee was made up without Administration members and everyone on it opposed 17.3.

## **PRESS LEADS NEW COUNTER ATTACK**

Over the next few days the authorities counter-attacked with the help of the mass media. Newspaper, television and radio commentators came out on the side of the Administration in reporting the sit-in, though few explained the issues involved lest it should show the authorities in a bad light, and draw sympathetic attention to the real concerns of the activists. The aim of the media was to centre attacks on a few 'ring leaders' and woo the rest of the students into submission by referring to a 'majority' of Monash students who were law abiding', and 'hard working' and who were suffering terribly from the activities of a minority 'intent on giving the university a bad name'. It was at about this time that the now rather worn out scare tactic of suggestions that radicals 'might close down the university' was first used. Quite suddenly the media began talking about the radicals 'stated aim' of 'bringing the university to a halt'. The funny

thing about this 'radical aim' was that most radicals first heard of it from reading the newspapers and listening to Dr. Matheson! A thorough reading of all the left wing broadsheets, statements etc., reveals not a mention of any such intention.

An important part of this press campaign was the narrowing down of the 'minority' into just one individual, Albert Langer. Langer was constantly pictured as some sinister 'behind-the-scenes operator'. In particular the media attacks played on people's distrust for anything or anyone out of the ordinary. No mention of Langer's actual political beliefs (except for loaded comments about him being a 'Communist') was made in newspaper stories which featured him; instead he was presented as some sort of 'alien' or 'freak'. 'Langer is a brilliant Maths honours student — he is also a master of manipulating people' (*Age*, 7th August) 'Over the whole crisis looms the shadow of rotund bearded Albert Langer' (brilliant political analysis of the *Herald*, 7th August). 'He, (Chris Dane, right wing student) thinks it would appeal to the public if a few hefty right wingers beat up the lefties. And until they act, Albert Langer pulls the strings'! (*Herald*, 7th August).

The media sought to create the impression that radicals are not just ordinary people but are somehow 'different', 'peculiar': 'They (the radicals) are quite quick, quite funny and quite cold. Their women stand out too. They carry a worldly flatness except when the action is on. Then they are in there with their men jumping just as much.' (*Age*, 7th August.)

`These maniac young men and their solemn joyless girlfriends seem little more than a sad, self-pitying coterie, working out the aggressions of their delayed adolescence' (*Age* editorial, 8th August).



`The activists are looking for an issue through which they could manipulate the emotions of all students' (*Sun*, 9th August).

All these 'news' paper stories, with sensational headings like 'The Siege of Monash', `Monash . . . Why It Is In Revolt', 'It's Up To Monash Says Bolte', and 'The Escalation' , emphasized the division of the moderates from the radicals: 'a small group of students is conducting a deliberate and callous campaign to wreck Monash University' (*Sun*, 9th August).

`A handful of militants are dominating the lives of nearly 10,000 Monash students. 'TODAY THE CAMPUS IS A HOTBED OF INTRIGUE'. 'peace is the early morning for Dr. Matheson. At 7.30 a.m. the Vice-Chancellor and his dog take their regular walk around the university grounds, greeting the new day and the gardeners. In the past week this has been the only time Dr. Matheson has really known peace. Albert Langer has seen to that.' (*Herald*, 7th August.)

Not many students really believed that their campus was a hotbed of intrigue, or that they were being manipulated by shadowy, bearded monsters, but the sum effect of the concerted press campaign did much to create a sense of impending crisis and undoubtedly sowed doubts in people's minds as to the motives of the militants. Many students who had probably agreed in principle with the struggle over 17.3 and discipline, began to want to draw a clearer line of demarcation between themselves and these cold, stereotyped, shadowy figures. The press attacks had the effect of diverting student attention away from the real minority behind the 'trouble', away from the handful of men in the Administration building who had deliberately spurned majority opinion and toward a belief that there had been some sinister plot to wreck the university.

It is hard to assess the real effect of the media attack over these few days. Though it is certainly true that on certain sections of the community the effect was definitely very great and probably long lasting, it should also be realized, (particularly by students who tend to be elitist) that most Australians have a healthy distrust of the mass media. Indeed the years since 1969 have found newspapers printing stories about workers' struggles in much the same way as they write about students. Whenever any group in society stands up and rebels or takes direct action in order to gain a demand, the same worn out story is trotted out to the public — a small minority manipulating a large decent majority. The trouble is that there isn't much 'public' left; groups from almost all sections of society from teachers to carpenters and S.E.C. workers have been victims of the same stereotyped attacks and the story of manipulation is wearing thin.

One of the less obvious effects of media attacks is on the radicals themselves who become demoralized and are led to believe that newspaper reports are an accurate reflection of public opinion. As the student movement develops links, with the working class and with the working class struggles (as is now happening) the effect of the mass media is bound to be far less. It is only when student struggles are completely separated from off-campus movements, that they can become really isolated.

On Thursday, 7th August, Matheson visited Bolte. Headlines in the *Herald* featured him accompanied by plain clothes policemen, entering State Parliament House through an iron grid complete with guard, intending to falsely suggest that 'the handful of militants' were 'out for violence' against the Vice-Chancellor himself. After the much publicized meeting Bolte said that he and Matheson had discussed 'their

impressions of control of universities overseas' (or, How best to stamp out rebellion?).

## MATHESON'S SPEECH TO THE NATION

On Friday, 8th August, the last day of second term, Dr. Matheson cancelled all lectures for one hour in order to address students over close-circuit television. Three days of newspaper publicity had prepared the way for him to launch this blistering attack on the 'violent minority' and since it would be three weeks before the radicals could present any organized defence, this was the ideal way for an effective Administration attack. The very drama of the close-circuit television 'appeal' to students gave the whole thing an atmosphere of gravity and which benefited Admin's policy of diverting attention away from issues such as 17.3 and towards the mythical 'plot to wreck the university'.

'Three possibilities face Monash,' Matheson proclaimed solemnly. 'We may follow the course that other universities have followed, even reaching such a state of chaos that we will have to close . . . We may continue in a state of present conflict with the affairs of the university occupying the mass media. This is producing a public reaction against the university which can hardly fail to be harmful to the students when they graduate. We may restore a state of affairs in which student grievances are sensibly discussed, negotiated and finally brought into legislation. This last situation existed until recently and it was possible to make progress so that the student "voice" was heard.

' . . . Serious damage has been done to the reputation of this university. People are apt to forget the good work that has been done and think that nothing happens except disturbances . . . The current disturbances have put a stigma on Monash that will take a long time to remove. The student

body must think what they can do to restore the reputation of the Monash degree . . . At the right moment a building may be occupied or some other violent act takes place; finally the university is closed and the president resigns.

` . . . There is a great bulk of moderate students who have plenty of grievances but would not normally react violently against the system. These students endeavour to change the system by democratic means unless they are manipulated into violent action . . . These events have introduced a new element onto campus and that element is violence . . . The present student mass meetings are perfectly devised for manipulation.

` . . . The responsibility rests on you, don't let this university be destroyed.'

Thus once again Matheson had used the tactic of wildly attacking the radicals and drawing attention away from himself so that he had not once attempted to defend or even deal with the clauses in the Discipline Statute and 17.3.

After his speech he agreed to attend a mass student meeting. The main question asked of him at this meeting was why only eight students had been disciplined for their part in the 'Bastille Day' demonstration. Could the Discipline trials have been merely an attempt to purge prominent Labor Club members? (All the eight students except one were Labor Club members.) Matheson replied that all students who could be identified as being present at the demonstration had been disciplined and that anyone else who came up and admitted being present at the incident would be disciplined. He received a round of applause for this smart answer, however many of the people who clapped probably never found out the dis-honesty of this statement. What did happen was that thirty-one students called his

bluff and signed legal affidavits saying they had participated in the demonstration. These affidavits were handed to Matheson. There was no reply for some time, but eventually (a safe distance into third term) each person received a letter saying that before disciplinary proceedings could be instituted they would have to admit

(a) that they heard an order to disperse, and

(b) that they had not dispersed.

In simple terms this meant that they had to plead guilty before being charged. In the case of the original eight however, Administration had required no evidence other than that they had been present, before charging them. It was now quite obvious that the authorities had carefully selected the eight with a view to possible expulsion or at least giving them disciplinary records which could lead to expulsion in later years. Victimization of leaders has since become a common antic of Australian University Administrations.

**MATHESON'S NEXT TRICK** In the middle of the vacation students were surprised to see an article in the *Age* entitled 'Monash Leaders Dodge Rebels'. The article began: 'Monash University Council side-stepped student disruption yesterday with an unpublicized meeting at the Alfred Hospital. The Vice- Chancellor (Dr. J. A. L. Matheson) said that the Administration building could not be defended. It contained ten doors and one hundred windows. "It could be that if I were setting up the university again I might not have an Administration Building," he said (*Age*, 12th August, 1969).'

The holding of the meeting at the Alfred Hospital was transparently aimed at achieving public sympathy for the

Monash Administration. The impression given by the newspaper reports of the meeting was that the Council was afraid to set foot on the campus due to the roving bands of violent delinquents. Matheson 'forgot' to tell the press three things however:

(i) that the whole university was on vacation at the time and this meant that the students couldn't have organized to disrupt the meeting,

(ii) that the Discipline trials had been proceeding completely uninterrupted on campus,

(iii) that since 'Bastille Day' demonstration a Council meeting had been held on campus and during the height of student opposition to Administration and this meeting had gone on quite peacefully.

## **DISCIPLINE**

While Council was meeting in terror off campus, the Discipline trials proceeded quietly on campus. Not long after the Committee had reconvened to hear the evidence, six of the defendants were excluded from the hearing for insubordination'. (The chairman objected to them talking to the observers.) Even when the defendants issued a written conditional apology' and applied to be readmitted so that they could defend themselves, the Chairman (Prof. Manton) refused to readmit them. Thus for the most part of the trial the majority of the accused were not even permitted to be present. The penalties eventually handed down were:

(1) The only non Labor Club member charged was acquitted.

(2) One Labor Club member received a \$20 fine which was later dropped on appeal.

(3) The six other Labor Club members . received 'suspended expulsions', i.e., were told that if they participated in any more direct action or 'misconduct' they would be automatically expelled.

### **WELL, WHAT HAPPENED TO 17.3?**

After all the ruckus had died down, Dr. Matheson announced that Council had decided to temporarily stop drafting the 'Status of Students Statute'. For the time being therefore it seemed safe to say 'we have won' on this issue. The only reason students achieved this small success however is that they dared to take direct action despite all the attacks and intimidatory statements from the Administration.

# THE LANGER EXCLUSION

1970 began badly for progressive students. Albert Langer was excluded from further studies at Monash and the majority of students at an M.A.S. meeting were prepared to accept this repressive action. It was a disappointing start to the year on the one hand, and on the other an important lesson in the dangers of complacency and arrogance on the part of the left. The powerful mass movement which was to develop some six months later was assisted by the lessons of this early failure.

In order to understand the reasons for the defeat of left-wing politics early in 1970, it is necessary to look back to the 1969 struggle against the Discipline Statute and against the exclusion of students with criminal records. The Labor Club had successfully led the campaign which ended in the Administration quietly shelving the clauses to which students objected. Nevertheless, the Left had suffered serious setbacks, which only became apparent when the Administration turned from open disciplinary measures to 'behind the scenes' moves in early 1970. The immense publicity campaign against the radicals, described in the last chapter had taken effect, both on the 2000 new students whose only knowledge of Monash politics was through the mass media, and to a lesser extent, on the 7000 other students.

Thus the spectre of sinister Albert Langer and his men' manipulating students into fearful acts of violence aimed at destroying the university was in many students' minds. Langer himself was the subject of vicious attacks in cartoons and on talk-back programs, and was hounded by the police, being convicted of putting domestic litter in a public litter



bin (sic!) and framed (later acquitted) of selling liquor without a licence. The atmosphere of hysteria diverted students from seeing the political nature of Langer's 'academic' exclusion to a 'stop Langer' attitude, and into believing the Labor Club's cries of political oppression were just another attempt to force a confrontation.

## **THE ACADEMIC ARGUMENTS**

Since the University authorities chose to conceal their attack against radicals under the cover of concern over academic qualifications, it is necessary to review the academic arguments. Langer's academic record had been:

### **Academic Record**

#### *1966 (Faculty of Science)*

Politics I	Credit
Mathematical Methods I	High Distinction
Physics I (A)	Distinction
Mathematics I	Distinction

#### *1967 (Transfer to Faculty of Arts)*

Pure Mathematics II (1) H	Honours First Class
Pure Mathematics II (2) H	Honours First Class
Mathematical Statistics IIB	Distinction

#### *1968*

Pure Mathematics III A H .	Honours First Class
Politics IIA	Credit

#### *1969*

Pure Mathematics 410 H	Second Class
Honours	Division B

He had thus qualified for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours. In 1970, he enrolled in the Information Science

(computing) Department in order to complete a Master of Science preliminary year in computing, with a view to completing a Masters degree in this field rather than in Pure Mathematics. In 1969, as part of his Pure Mathematics course, he had completed a third year unit in Information Science, and Professor Wallace, Chairman of the Information Science Department, had said that he 'performed very well in the examination on this unit, coming third and second in a class of about 30 students'.

He was accepted by the Information Science Department in early 1970 and given work to do towards an M.Sc. Prelim. Professor Wallace stated (13th February, 1970) 'Mr. Langer has obvious ability in this field . . . he has considerable mathematical ability'.

One month later he was informed by Professor Westfold, Dean of Science, that the Dean's office had overruled the decision of the Information Science Department. Professor Westfold stated in a letter to Langer (9th February, 1970):

'As you were told by Professor Wallace, he regards you as no more than marginally qualified. He, therefore, had not made a strong recommendation in support of your admission.

Professor Finch (Mathematics) is himself quite clear that your performance is inadequate for admission to graduate studies in mathematics.'

The first point contradicts Professor Wallace's comments, and the second was denied on the 3rd March by Professor Finch, who had just returned from overseas. He said that he had discussed with Langer '... the possibility of doing graduate work in Mathematics but only in terms of one particular branch of mathematics . . . to my mind that does

not preclude the possibility of your undertaking successful research in some other branch of mathematics'. Professor Finch said that he regarded a statement attributed to him by Professor Westfold, that had it not been for Langer's good academic record in early years he would have obtained only third class honours, as a 'deliberate sophistry'.

Professor Wallace said in a press release: 'I wish to make it quite clear that it was the unanimous decision of my department that Mr. Langer was qualified to proceed ...'

In the arguments that followed, two trends emerged, each supporting the claim that Langer was being refused admission for political reasons. Firstly, the procedures followed by the academics concerned were highly irregular. There were meetings between the Vice-Chancellor and Professor Wallace and there were departmental meetings before the Faculty Board meeting that followed the Westfold statement. The Faculty Board meeting, held on 11th February, had a highly 'stage-managed' atmosphere. The subsequent release of statements attacking Langer's academic record to the press, before the matter had even been raised as an issue within the University, was not only a highly irregular breach of confidence, but an admission that the exercise was one involving public relations rather than academic qualifications.

The second indication that it had been decided to remove Langer *before* any reasons for doing so were formulated, was the fact that the University authorities kept putting forward new reasons for their decision after their original ones had been rebutted.

It was later claimed by Professors Westfold and Holloway (16th March, 1970) that 'there had been no previous case at Monash of a graduate with an honours degree being

admitted to an M.Sc. preliminary course immediately after honours year'. In fact one student had been admitted to an M.Sc. Prelim. course in Information Science with a *third* class honours degree from Melbourne University. The learned professors had apparently forgotten about this.

In a letter to the Public Affairs Committee (26th February) and in a statement to the *Age* (2nd March), Professor Westfold claimed that at least a 2A honours degree was required to proceed to graduate work. This statement, which was repeated frequently by D.L.P. Club members, and in *Free Speech* was quite irrelevant whether it was true or not. Langer had not applied directly to do a Master's or a Ph.D.; he applied to do an M.Sc. *Prelim*. The minimum pre-requisite for 'prelims' has always been a pass degree. In fact, in 1969 six students were admitted to M.Sc. Prelim with B.Sc. pass degrees and no additional qualifications. (Science Faculty Board, Document numbers 16/1969, 23/1969, and 84/1969.) One must assume that the assertion that Langer was not qualified for admission to the Master's degree was made consciously to confuse people into thinking that he was not qualified to do an M.Sc. Prelim. As a matter of fact the statement was also untrue as regards full Master's degrees and the Faculty records also show that it was quite normal in previous years for candidates with Langer's qualifications to proceed directly to full Master's degrees.

It was of course much easier for Professor Westfold to issue his statements to the press than it was for the Labor Club to persuade students to follow the ins and outs of all this in order to determine for themselves whether or not a respected academic was lying to them.

The next reason to be added was that Langer was not a bona fide applicant, as he had also applied for entry into the Faculties of Law and Economics and Politics. This claim was

made by Professors Westfold and Holloway on 16th March. It was also made by Mr. Butchart, the Academic Registrar, in a letter to Langer, which included statements like 'In view of your unsatisfactory performances in Politics' (he had achieved two credits in this subject!) and '". . . you are making indiscriminate efforts to enter any faculty of the University'. (The standard V.U.A.C. form on which Langer applied has space for a number of preferences, which Langer filled in.)

The lies and distortions faithfully and abundantly echoed in *Free Speech* were refuted one by one, though that bastion of liberalism, adopting the methods of the daily press, never once saw fit to retract. Free Speech went so far as to quote Professor Finch, who opposed the exclusion, as saying he supported it. Since the broadsheet was published on the day of an M.A.S. meeting, the lie could not be refuted before the vote on the matter.

## **THE M.A.S. REACTION**

In the second week of term an M.A.S. meeting was called to decide student policy on the issue. Each speaker in turn got up and argued about the various ins and outs of academia, quoting from this professor, that professor, and generally adding confusion to confusion. When the vote was finally taken, the meeting appeared to be evenly divided and Chairman Warwick Nelson announced that another M.A.S. meeting would be held as soon as possible to make a definite decision on the matter. By this stage the left was finally beginning to realize that students did not really understand the arguments and were so confused by all the facts and figures placed before them that they had simply decided to give the benefit of the doubt to the right rather than to the left. Therefore the Labor Club decided to encourage every member to go around the campus talking

to students about the whole affair to find out how deep the reaction against the left really was, and on what basis the rest of the campaign should be fought. The results of this investigation were rather frightening from the left point of view.

It was quite clearly confirmed that first year students and many later year ones did have a bigoted attitude towards the Labor Club. Most of those talked to admitted quite plainly that they didn't care about the academic arguments and were quite unashamedly prepared to take the position that Langer was a 'stirrer' and should therefore be excluded whatever his academic standing and abilities. Generally, those students who had more personal contact with left-wing politics were more sympathetic than those who had less.

The second M.A.S. meeting came up with most students still completely confused and bewildered by the streams of 'facts' and 'counter facts' being distributed to them from all sides. Right wing speakers got up at the meeting and reeled off long lists of statements such as 'Langer failed 4th year but was "bumped up" '; 'Langer wants a second chance'; 'Langer wants to deprive other students of their rightful places in M.Sc. Prelim. so that he can stir on campus'; 'No one with less than a 2A honour is admitted to M.Sc.' Left-wing speakers stood up to refute these arguments and discovered that it is easier to lie in a three minute speech than to refute a lie by more than bold assertion in the same time. The meeting again became bogged down in detailed debate on academic questions and once again the real political basis of the objection to Langer was not brought out. The left should have consistently tied the academic reasons for Langer's exclusion to the political reasons: this would have given students a much clearer understanding of the whole issue. It is probably also true that many of the left

(and the D.L.P. Club) did not fully understand the workings of Faculty Boards and admission policies, and could not successfully counter the false academic arguments. Thus when the vote came, the meeting voted against condemning Westfold for excluding Langer by about 10 (votes to 900).

### **M.A.S. REVERSES ITS POSITION**

After being rejected from Monash, Langer applied to do the same course at Melbourne University. The authorities at Melbourne agreed that his qualifications were quite adequate for the course and the Department agreed to admit him. However he was eventually excluded after the Professorial Board dug up an old regulation which required for any applicant from another university to produce a certificate of 'good name and character' if requested from the authorities at that institution. Naturally Administration refused to give Langer any such certificate.

After the failure of the early M.A.S. meeting to take a stand against his exclusion from the university Langer decided to attend lectures in order to do some private work. He approached Professor Wallace and was given permission to attend lectures in Information Science.

The matter was discussed on the University Council and the Academic Registrar drafted a directive requiring anyone, (even a graduate), to obtain permission from him to attend lectures, and then denied Langer permission.

This action on the part of the Administration, coupled with his exclusion from Melbourne University, led students to reflect on the whole issue. Many concluded that his exclusion from M.Sc. Prelim. too, was on political, rather than academic grounds.

At a later stage in the year, when all this had come out, and the first year students had become more integrated into Monash life, a further M.A.S. meeting was held which, although smaller than the previous ones, voted overwhelmingly to demand that Langer be immediately re-instated. The overwhelming vote resulted because no effort was made to confuse the issue with 'academic' lies and instead at this meeting some of the right-wingers demonstrated a burst of honesty by getting up and supporting the Administration on the grounds that Langer should not be admitted to Monash because he gave the place a 'bad' name. This was the only time they admitted their real position. So far the Administration has not followed suit.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

The campaign against the expulsions which occurred soon after this M.A.S. meeting precluded any real campaign against Langer's exclusion specially. However A.U.S. (Australian Union of Students) took a stand and attacked the Monash administration. Langer was later asked by this body to formally apply for admittance to every university in Australia, in order to test the repressiveness of university administrations overall. He, and the three expelled Monash students (see later chapter) did this at the end of 1970. They were rejected by every university in Australia.

Langer also put in an application for Dip.Ed. at Monash, a course for which there was no doubt he was qualified. Letters went out to all students who had been selected by 17th January so that enrolment could begin on the 20th. Langer did not receive a letter. When he enquired at the Dip.Ed. Faculty he was told his application was being processed separately and the results of this would not be known for about a week! His application had been handed



over to Dr. Matheson for his personal consideration since the selection committee felt it could not make the decision. Finally, two weeks later, he was reluctantly admitted to the faculty. Obviously, Langer was given 'special' consideration because of his political views, but having insisted that his exclusion was on academic grounds, Administration were left with no alternative but to admit him to Dip.Ed.

Strangely, having been admitted to Education, Langer was suddenly eligible for Law and to sit-in on other lectures. He was even told that his application for M.Sc. Prelim could be reconsidered!

The inconsistencies and contradictions which characterized the actions of Administration were revealed gradually through these subsequent events. Many students who had previously accepted the arguments that Langer was 'academically unqualified' began to doubt the credibility and the authority of Administration statements. The seriousness of this cannot be overestimated. Previously students might have thought that the learned Deans and Professors that ran the University were wrong, or even that they were reactionary. But to discover that some of them were outright unscrupulous liars was quite a different matter. The tactic of disguising their political aims with deliberate lies gave Admin a temporary victory . . . simply because students just didn't expect academics, supposedly dedicated to 'the quest for truth', to be lying to them — they preferred to believe that it was the left who were lying. But in the long run it was inevitable that students would see through the lies and come to resent those who had made use of their positions to deceive them.

By resorting to open dishonesty the Administration lost one of its most important assets — the aura of 'authority' which is created around all established institutions and the

particular aura that is created around the myth of 'academic freedom' at universities. For the large minority who knew all along that the majority had been deliberately deceived, it was no great step to go from recognizing that senior academics were liars to recognizing that their whole job in running the University was based on lying — that it involved preserving and disseminating an ideology based on lies, in the name of 'knowledge', and in the interests of the U.S. imperialist controllers of Australia.

The bitterness and anger of the minority of students at their defeat spurred them on all the harder to expose the Administration's real position through the C & A Occupation described in the next chapter. Events proved that it was not long before the rest of the students woke up and joined them in the ensuing struggle.

The tactic of 'academic exclusion' was ultimately defeated, although there are still fairly blatant instances of discrimination against active radicals through marking down essays and exams. A permanent M.A.S. 'watchdog,' committee has been established to investigate any complaints of discrimination and no students have been excluded unjustly since the establishment of this committee.

Nevertheless, the 'normal' process of requiring students to memorize and regurgitate large quantities of bourgeois ideology disguised as humanities, or even science, continues. Students continue to be excluded when they fail to satisfy the set requirements of participation in esoteric waffle totally unrelated to reality. In Universities, the ultimate 'discipline' still remains the 'objective' sifting carried out by Faculty Boards and Departments inaccessible to student scrutiny, usually under the guise of exams.

# THE EXPULSIONS

After the Langer exclusion affair, a somewhat embittered left turned its attention to the coming Moratorium (8th May) with renewed vigour. This, the first Moratorium, was significant at Monash for three reasons. Firstly, because large numbers of students and many staff members were organized to actually work for the demonstration (publicity, marshalling, etc.). Secondly, because the Moratorium campaign at Monash was focused on the real cause of the War, the United States' aggression in Indo-China. Thirdly, because an estimated 5000 Monash students and staff were mobilized to march in the Moratorium, causing a virtual halt to the normal University processes.

This intense activity before the Moratorium became the model for the organization of campaigns for the rest of the year. The structure that was established — general meetings making important policy decisions, a Steering Committee to co-ordinate activities, and a number of committees that students could work with, such as Faculty groups, a publicity committee, and an off-campus committee — has worked effectively in a number of different campaigns since.

It was in response to the Moratorium activity that the whole question of the University's neutrality was re-examined. This question was raised when Professor Feith addressed a Graduation Ceremony and urged those present to march. Students began questioning the Administration's policy that a university can, or should, be neutral on political issues — a policy expressed by Dr. Matheson in a letter to *The Bulletin* (6th June, 1970). Here he said that he felt 'qualified disapproval' of the cancellation of classes on the day of the Moratorium, and that 'my attitude has always been that the

University as a whole must be politically neutral whatever the beliefs of its individual members'. Many students who began questioning the validity of this, concluded that the University's so-called 'neutrality' was merely a facade. Rather, it tended to be positively occupied in maintaining the Capitalist status quo by providing submissive graduates to man the system, just when it ought to have been questioning established values, especially on issues like ecology, the Vietnam War, etc. The occupation of the Careers and Appointments (C. & A.) Office in July brought the debate to the fore. Following the Moratorium, however, there was a period of calm, while public attention was diverted to the new enfant terrible, La Trobe, where students were preventing the Defence Department from conducting interviews. It seemed that Warwick Nelson's statement as retiring Chairman of M.A.S. to *The Age* on 25th April was coming true:

'I don't think we'll have a year like last year. I think there'll be a general reaction to the events of last year.'

In fact political activity in 1970 turned out to be greater than any other year at Monash. This sort of prediction occurs regularly as conservatives try to ignore the growth of Left political awareness.

## **THE C. & A. OCCUPATION**

During the Moratorium period the left at Monash had been consistently putting forward the view that the Vietnam War was caused by the United States' imperialism; that it was a war to protect United States' capitalism both materially and ideologically. At that time a lot of Moratorium activists had rejected this view, saying that the war was some sort of 'accident' or 'mistake', or that it was caused because the U.S. had 'bad' or 'mad' presidents and so on. The Labor Club,

which had consistently supported the N.L.F. (since 1967) took the hard line view that the United States was an imperialist power which quite deliberately waged wars all over the world and in particular wherever people challenged its interests, economic, military, or political. Further it claimed that the U.S. had imperialist designs on Australia and was rapidly extending its economic, cultural, political and military influence here as well as getting Australians to fight in Vietnam. Big capitalist monopolies, particularly U.S. ones, caused and profited from wars like Vietnam and exploited people in Australia and all over the world. It was they who had to be fought, because they were the real enemies.

When the U.S. monopoly Honeywell came to the Careers and Appointments Office to interview students, the Labor Club put out leaflets explaining that Honeywell was making 40% of its total profit from supplying the U.S. army with weapons, in particular anti-personnel bombs. A rally was called, and about one hundred angry students stormed up to the C. & A. Office and threatened to physically drive the Honeywell representatives off campus. The Honeywell representatives beat a hasty retreat! This relatively minor demonstration was really the beginning of the now well known 'Careers and Appointments Office' Occupation. The question of Honeywell on campus raised the whole question of university neutrality in a very concrete way.

For several months Print and other Labour Club publications had been propagating the views expressed above. However at the broadsheet level these ideas were bound to remain fairly abstract as far as most students were concerned and nobody really took very much notice . . . that is, until the C & A affair.

The last week in June was Anti-Imperialism Week both on and off-campus. This was the week leading up to the traditional 4th July (U.S. Independence Day) demonstration. On campus the Labor Club decided that some-thing must be done at Monash to highlight the role of U.S. imperialism and its capitalist partners in the world today. An M.A.S. meeting was held on Monday, 29th June and motions were passed declaring the war in Vietnam to be a direct product of U.S. imperialism, declaring support for the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (Viet Cong), authorizing collections for the N.L.F. and supporting the anti-U.S. imperialist demonstrations to be held on 3rd and 4th July.

Immediately after this meeting about fifty students occupied the Careers and Appointments Office with the express intentions of taking it over until 3rd July and using it as an anti-imperialist organizing centre. The reasons for the occupation were outlined in the broadsheet *Occupation News 3*:

- '1. To point out how this University serves capitalism instead of the majority of the working people.
2. To discontinue the activities of the C & A Office which is designed to provide cadres for capitalism (Uni. graduates) and promote and further their exploitation and their imperialist aims.
3. To use this office as a base for the publication and dissemination of literature—to promote the 3rd and 4th July demonstrations and anti-imperialism in general.
4. To protest at the use of the Monash computer centre for Defence Department contract work while the

Defence Department is actively aiding United States' aggression in Vietnam.

5. To draw attention to the Vice-Chancellor's M.U.S.I.C. (Monash University Scientific and Industrial Community) scheme whereby the University will provide the facilities of an "academic merchant bank" (Matheson's phrase).
6. To protest at the moves to prevent Albert Langer from sitting in on lectures.'

The occupation itself lasted three days, then the longest occupation in any Australian university. It was an 'occupation' in the true sense of the word in that the office was completely taken over and prevented from performing its normal functions. Every hour on the hour for the first day, administration officials arrived to recite their 'reasonable order to leave the office'. Every hour on the hour students were guilty of disobeying a 'reasonable order'. Matheson issued a statement that administration policy was one of 'non-violent containment of invasion'. In effect this meant that during the daytime security guards were assigned the duty of 'containing' the occupiers to approximately one half of the office complex, and during the evening and night (beginning at 5.00 p.m. when Admin officialdom knocks off) 'triffid' activity was able to expand throughout the entire office area and into the student counselling office while the security men, in the absence of their superiors, enjoyed hot cups of coffee and exchanged experiences with the occupiers. Most activity went on at night because this was the period of least surveillance from Admin and most free time for the occupiers. Each night all the duplicating machines of the C. & A. student counselling offices whirred and clacked continually as anti-imperialist leaflets were stockpiled in preparation for the 'lean daylight hours'. Students slept in four-hour shifts, each group waking in turn

to shoulder part of the work-load in preparation for the long day ahead. During the three days approximately thirty leaflets were produced.

One of Admin's attempts at harassment of the occupiers was the stealing of all the phones. Unperturbed by this, Labor Club technical experts proceeded to rewire one office and attach a handset to the phone cables. Then Admin notified the switchboard to cut off all calls to and from the C. & A. Office. Once again technical experts were called in, the C. & A. Office ended up with a private phone number known only to the occupiers and friends.

On the second day word reached the occupiers that about one hundred engineering students were marching on the office to 'physically throw them out'. The front doors were hastily locked and barricaded while the occupiers held a hasty and tense conference. It was finally decided almost unanimously that since they were confident of the moral correctness of their position they should open the doors and invite these students in for a look around the place and for discussion. Accordingly it was done, and the vigilante squad, surprised at not being met by a violent mob of non-student delinquents whom they had read about in the newspapers, accepted the invitation and came in for a tour of inspection followed by coffee and discussion. This was perhaps the most beneficial afternoon of the whole occupation. The occupiers and the Engineering students succeeded in getting on very well and both groups learnt from each other. Much of the active hostility towards the occupation began to die down after this because the occupiers formally instituted a policy of inviting all interested students to come up to the office and see what was going on there. As a result of this about one thousand students. 'toured' the office showing an active interest in the issues raised by the occupation. However, a large majority of students remained apathetic



towards events in the C & A Office until several months later when the campaign against the expulsions confronted them.

The Administration attempted to stop the steady flow of students through the office by placing a huge sign at the entrance stating that the office was out of bounds to all students and any student identified as having entered the office for any reason would be disciplined. When this did not work they decided to institute siege tactics. This was done by blocking all the doorways with security guards and refusing to let out any student without first identifying him/herself to the authorities. Photographers from Admin waited next to the security men.

Eventually about twenty of those inside put newspaper masks over their faces and rushed out of the offices evading remarkably feeble attempts at capture from the guards. The few people who now remained in the offices were nearly all 'well-known lefties' and knew that Admin would try to 'get' them after the occupation anyway. However it was conscious Labor Club Committee policy to have a second-line of activists not as open to repression as the first.

The people remaining were in a very difficult position. If they had vacated the office alongside the others then Admin would have been able to physically shut down the office. Leaving was therefore out of the question. But staying on under the existing circumstances was also impossible. Thus they came to a difficult decision. They agreed to open the doors to the inner office and identify themselves to Admin if in return the authorities would 'free' the door and let the occupation continue as before until 3rd July. The doors were opened to a procession of Deans, faculty rolls in hands, followed by Admin officials who proceeded to search all the people-sized cupboards, and annexes. The students gave

their names, the procession left, never to return and the doors were opened so that the occupation could continue.

The fact that the authorities agreed so readily to let the protest continue provided the small number remaining gave their names, indicated that they were more concerned with preparing for a purge of 'ringleaders' than with stopping the occupation. If they had refused to accept this compromise then the whole thing would have been over very shortly. Instead they chose to get positive identification of just a few participants and let the terrible 'invasion' go on.

On Friday, 3rd July the occupiers marched out of the office, singing *Solidarity Forever* and leaving the office spic and span for the return of its usual occupiers.

The press, and the 'University Officials' they quoted, tried to isolate the occupying students. The *Sun* (1st July) quoted University officials as saying that 'these people were only professional rabble-rousers', and a 'fair percentage were not Monash students'.

A *Herald* editorial of 7th July, filled with moral outrage, was typical of that newspaper:

'It is distressing to think what would happen if these young men—being afforded the benefits of tertiary education at public expense—carried into adult life the petulant defiance of majority rule which they now so disruptively espouse.'

A large general meeting of the Monash Association of Students dissociated itself from the occupation but voted against allowing the University Administration to deal with the students as it wished. Indeed a sizeable section of the left disagreed with the decision to hold the occupation for one reason or another. Some thought that it was tactically wrong because insufficient attention had been given to

gaining support on the issues from the students as a whole, and that the occupiers would therefore be unable to be protected from the probable attempts at disciplinary action by Admin. Some thought this disciplinary action would include mass expulsions of Labor Club activists and criticised the occupation tactic as being adventurist. Some also believed that the occupation was theoretically wrong, saying that even if sufficient student support could be gained, the ensuing struggle would be on what they considered to be the purely liberal grounds that 'students should not be victimised by Admin for political activity', and that the issues of capitalism and imperialism would be buried in the liberal rhetoric. Nevertheless many of the opponents of the occupation assisted in its operation after a Labor Club meeting had agreed to launch it.

Nonetheless, discipline proceedings were instituted on 7th July against nine students, purportedly the only ones identifiable during the three day occupation. They were charged with failing to obey a reasonable order to leave the C. & A. Office. The proceedings took place under the old discipline statute which had been almost universally condemned by the students and staff of the University.

The nine charged students refused to attend the 'trial' on the grounds that they did not recognize the court because it would not consider the reasons for their actions and was only concerned with whether or not they had disobeyed an order and because it consisted of reactionary Deans who had no right to 'judge' them. Also, the students had learned by hard personal experience in 1969 that it was a complete waste of time attending Discipline trials because any 'defence' only caused the trial to drag out longer with no effect on the verdict whatever. What the 'nine' wanted was for the trial to be over with as soon as possible, preferably before 3rd term so that if the sentences were severe, a mass

campaign could be waged against them. They informed the Discipline Committee in writing of their intention not to appear and requested that the trial be completed as soon as possible. However the Discipline Committee dragged out the trial as long as possible and announced the penalties during the August vacation (11th August) though the verdict of 'guilty' had been announced earlier. This was an obvious bid to prevent the organizing of a mass campaign against the sentences. Of the nine students, seven were expelled, two for life, one for two years, and four for twelve months. Another received 'twelve months suspended exclusion' and the ninth has his case adjourned. Appeals could be lodged by 11th September. Matheson, when confronted with criticism about why the trial took so long as to be concluded in the vacation, stated 'disciplinary proceedings were drawn out entirely because of the tactics of those who were accused, who used every means of delaying decisions' (10th October). This was a deliberate distortion. It is interesting to note that all expulsions of students from Australian Universities (Sydney, Monash, La Trobe, Melbourne) have been announced during a vacation.

The *Herald* hailed these savage sentences as perhaps 'allaying the worst fears of many citizens that dangerous minorities would be able to disrupt the life of a great University' (13th August). The Brisbane *Truth* chimed in with the headline 'Get Rid of These Ratbags'.

The University Administrators were gambling on the usual third term 'exam fever' to quell any reaction to these sentences. However their gamble lost. Immediately, during the vacation, a broadly based group called the 'United Front Against Repression' was formed to co-ordinate activities aimed at getting the nine reinstated.

Students usually politically inactive, but now shocked by the severity of the sentences, came forward and volunteered to play an active role in the campaign. It was proposed that the struggle be conducted in much the same way as the Moratorium, with people who opposed the expulsions for any reason whatsoever being encouraged to put forward their views and take part in discussions as to how the campaign should be waged. Thus revolutionaries who had unconditionally supported the C. & A. Occupation found themselves working side by side with conservatives who had opposed it but thought the expulsions were too harsh a punishment. Though people of many different sympathies opposed the expulsions, there was one common factor . . . everyone saw them as a manifestation of political repression against left-wingers. It was widely thought that Admin had jumped at the opportunity to expel prominent left-wingers in a bid to cut back on the general radical activity emanating from Monash. Why else were the sentences so severe? Apolitical students involved in really serious vandalistic acts during 'Farm Week' had been given only light fines, yet Labor Club anti-imperialists had been expelled for life for organizing a political protest. An indication of the depth and breadth of the campaign is given by an independent broadsheet entitled *To All Science and Engineering Students*:

'I am against the occupation and was one of the leaders of the group of engineering students who tried to force them out. However, after many hours of discussion I have found out their views, and even when they contradict mine, I can respect them, and even more when these people stand by them.

However, I cannot, as a member of this university, sit idly by while a few people hand down these vicious punishments that have no connection with the crime but

are in fact practical punishments to suppress radical students.' The leaflet was signed.

## **THE CAMPAIGN MOUNTS**

As students came back to university on the first day of third term they were greeted with huge posters reading 'SUPPORT THE NINE', 'NO EXPULSIONS', 'DEFEAT U.S. IMPERIALISM'. An information table was set up in the Union to distribute several broadsheets which had already been produced.

A printed statement from the expelled students read as follows:

We are asking students to oppose the expulsions not because they were handed down under the old statute, not because we want a second chance, not because they were too harsh but because we continue to believe that the occupation of the C & A Office was a justified and morally correct action. . . .

Who are the real criminals in the C & A Office affair? Those big companies which legally occupy each day or the students who prevented them from doing this for a short period time in order to take a stand against their criminal activities in Vietnam and right throughout the rest of the world? Who really deserves to be expelled from this campus? Those millionaire companies making profits from imperialist wars or students who protest against this?

We believe that the university administration had no right to expel or discipline us for our activities against these companies. We do not manufacture defoliants with which to starve and deform people, we do not design missile systems for more efficient bombing, we do not take over the Monash Computer centre for research into more efficient army communications (the Defence Department was using the

Computer centre . . . Ed.) we do not manufacture anti-personnel bombs, we do not make napalm for more efficient burning of human bodies. We have joined in the fight against, the companies who do these things and do not accept the right of Dr. Matheson and his administration to expel us for this.

It has been said that it was undemocratic for us to prevent business as usual in the C & A Office. Somehow we are supposed to have made an attack on the 'democratic right' of people to work for or own big companies such as General Electric, Conzinc Rio Tinto, Honeywell, etc. But what is a 'democratic right'? It is surely not a right to kill, exploit, maim and deprive in the interests of private profit, ALL of which the above named companies do. We say that these big corporations have no democratic rights and that furthermore it is justified and necessary for all people to struggle against them in every way possible. The fact that Honeywell, C.R.A., G.E., are all legal in Australia makes no difference. Their legality is a clear demonstration of what interests are served by law and order in this country.

We did not attend the trial because we saw it as a complete farce organised by people who had already made it quite clear that they supported the so-called 'rights' of imperialist companies. The only grounds upon which we could possibly defend our actions are political (i.e. in terms of our opposition to imperialism). The only thing that the administration regarded as relevant to the case was whether or not we had obeyed a particular order. ... Despite their refusal to consider imperialism as a part of the trial, it is quite clear that the people who judged us had a particular hatred for our political beliefs . . . otherwise they would have handed down the normal \$20 fine which was given to 'Farm Week' stirrers for participating in apolitical, violent and expensive pranks. Surprisingly(?) enough, we received

expulsions and suspensions. Quite obviously disruption at this university is quite permissible when apolitical but the worst offence possible when directed at the rights of monopoly, imperialist companies.

At 1.00 p.m. that day, the Labor Club held its own anti-expulsions rally in the Union, attended by over 1000 people. Feeling at the rally was solidly and militantly against the expulsions.

The next day an M.A.S. meeting attended by approximately 3000 students overwhelmingly passed a series of anti-expulsions motions including one which stated that M.A.S. would continue to recognize the expelled students as members of Monash University. This was a reply from M.A.S. to letters which the expelled students had received from the Vice-Chancellor, stating that they had 'no rights as students or as members of the public to enter the Monash University campus', and threatening legal action if they 'trespassed'. Another M.A.S. meeting held a few days later voted to organize a lecture boycott to coincide with a Council meeting due to be held on 14th September. It was at this point that the campaign really took off.

Each faculty set up an anti-expulsions steering committee to publish regular faculty newsheets and to call a faculty meeting to organize for the boycott. M.A.S. had authorized \$500 to be given to an anti-Discipline Committee consisting of the expelled students who were to help co-ordinate all the activity. An office in the Union was used as 'headquarters' for the struggle. This office was a hive of activity. Charts covered all the walls listing which faculties had held general meetings, how many picket lines had already been organized, the tutors and lecturers who had already notified M.A.S. that they would be cancelling classes on 14th September, what jobs needed to be done, who was on roster



that day and the names and addresses of the emergency 'typing pool'. Students who had never done more than vote at M.A.S. meetings were now putting out leaflets, calling meetings in their faculties and making speeches. For the first time it was not just up to the committed radicals to do the hard work, make all the speeches and generally 'push things along'. Hundreds of students were doing all this now.

By the end of the first week of third term there had been one mass rally, two M.A.S. meetings, a symbolic 'brick-in' of the Admin building and a large number of faculty general meetings. Week two began with a large M.A.S. meeting reaffirming all previous decisions and the expelled students being officially constituted as an M.A.S. Committee with a \$500 budget. At this point Admin threatened to cut off M.A.S. funds. This threat temporarily halted some of the moderates who were afraid that if the anti-expulsions movement continued there would be no money in the M.A.S. coffers for the coming 18th September Moratorium. However when the mass of students continued to take a firm stand, Admin backed down and was forced to ignore the fact that the M.A.S. Discipline Committee was using hundreds of dollars worth of M.A.S. petty cash, paper, ink and roneoing facilities.

Two days later, on 9th September, the Alexander Theatre was packed out for a staff/student forum on Political Repression. Dr. Birrell, a lecturer in Sociology, was one of the main speakers and announced that he would defy the Administration by treating the expelled students as ordinary students and allowing them to attend lectures and sit for exams. (Several of those expelled were Sociology students.) Perhaps the best received speech came from Beau Reed, Union House Manager and an employee of Admin, who laid his own job on the line by daring to speak out against the expulsions, linking them with Admin's bad treatment of

campus workers. The whole theatre resounded with cheers and morale was incredibly lifted at this very concrete demonstration of the united front that was developing around the anti-expulsions movement. The isolation of Admin was becoming more and more evident with each passing day.

Next day, yet another M.A.S. meeting was held. This meeting voted to combine all Monash Moratorium activity and the struggle against the expulsions with leaflets, speeches, rallies uniting the struggle against repression with the struggle against U.S. aggression in Vietnam. By this time statements of support for those expelled had come in from both the official Moratorium Secretariat and from the Draft Resisters Union. It was also decided to occupy the whole Union building twenty-four hours a day as an organizing centre for the joint campaigns, with duplicating equipment, typewriters, and paper being supplied in the Union foyer to be used freely by any student who wanted to join in the fight. While this M.A.S. meeting was going on, Sociology staff were also meeting to discuss the current situation. This resulted in a unanimous decision to back Dr. Birrell in his firm stand against the expulsions.

The last day of that second week saw more Faculty general meetings, more pledges of support from staff and an M.A.S. referendum which voted overwhelmingly against the expulsions.

## **BOYCOTT**

The Boycott was held on Monday, 14th September in an atmosphere of intense urgency. Everyone now realized that Admin was relying on exams to cut short the struggle, but this just made people all the more determined to fight harder. A printed broadsheet 'BOYCOTT' published by the

M.A.S., Discipline Committee, was distributed on the morning of the Boycott. It read:

'To urge each and every person working in this university to boycott their classes and work is a big demand. However the seriousness of the issue calls for serious action. This broadsheet is not simply a request for all of you to make a few sacrifices. Rather it is an attempt to say that this repression, if it doesn't affect you now, will hit you sooner or later. And the only way you can stop this wave of repression is to fight it.'

A roneoed insert to this broadsheet added:

'Legally the next course open to the expelled students is an appeal to the University Council.

The Council is the supreme ruling body of Monash and meets once a month to ponder administrative matters and decide on all aspects of university policy. Unfortunately, however, Council is not composed of students, staff and workers, all concerned with discovering new ways to help build a university which is run in the interests of the vast majority of working people. Instead, a large number of its members come directly from industry and are therefore in favour of preserving the university as an institution which serves the big industrialists who effectively rule this country *at the expense of the majority of the population*. Would these men be any more sympathetic to the disciplined students (without having their hands forced by militant demonstrations from thousands of students) than the first discipline committee was?'

Dr. Cairns who was at Monash to speak on the Moratorium, agreed to follow the M.A.S. policy of linking the Moratorium

and the expulsions by speaking from the steps of Admin to the assembled boycotters.

At 1.00 p.m. about 4000 people gathered to hear him speak and to participate in the anti-expulsions rally. At 2.15 p.m. when the official boycott of lectures began about 2500 students and staff remained. The rest of the Boycott was a bit of an anti-climax. As the afternoon wore on and people began to get tired of standing listening to speeches and waiting for some response from Council it became more and more obvious that the meeting going on inside had not the slightest intention of taking any notice of the mass vigil outside. Finally the rally sent in a formal request, asking that a delegation representing the Boycott be admitted to the Council meeting. Forty minutes later angry students broke into the basement of the building saying that they would stay there until Council indicated its willingness to at least hear what they had to say. About ten minutes later a hurried messenger scurried into the basement and announced that the delegation would be heard by Council provided everyone left the building. Accordingly the basement was vacated and students resumed their waiting posts outside. It was at this stage that a man was seen photographing students from inside the Admin building.

Finally when the rally had dwindled to half its original size, the delegation returned with the announcement that Council, in its infinite wisdom and justice, had granted the expelled students an extra week in which to lodge their appeals.

Morale was low at the end of the Boycott. Thousands of students and staff had shown their opposition to Admin with no apparent effect. Obviously those opposing the expulsions were going to have to do more than 'lodge their protests'.

The 'legitimate means of protest' were simply having no effect. Other means would have to be tried.

Next day an M.A.S. meeting was held. It was here that the tactic of occupation was first formally proposed. The Boycott had obviously failed in its primary aim of persuading Council to readmit the students. Militant speakers put forward the argument that the only thing the authorities would listen to was mass direct action. The majority of students at the meeting were still reluctant to give their support to an occupation however. Common arguments were: 'We'll have to break in to the Admin building.' More people will be expelled.' The expelled students should appeal and only if this last legal channel has been proved useless should we consider occupying.' It was this last argument which swung the meeting and the occupation motion was lost.

After the meeting the expelled students held a tense discussion. What could be done now? It looked as if the whole struggle was going to slowly peter out with an almost complete victory going to Admin. So far they had taken the line that not only would it be useless to appeal to Council, it would also be dangerous. Such an appeal would almost certainly not be heard until exam time and moderate students would be able to put off any direct action on the basis that 'we have to wait until the appeals are over'. Now that a large number of students had clearly indicated that they felt an appeal should be lodged, the expelled students changed their minds. Reluctantly they took the decision to immediately lodge applications to appeal. At the same time they decided that it was essential to demand that the hearings be held within the next week. If this demand was not met it would be pretty obvious that Administration was stalling until exam time and direct action would once again become a serious possibility. The Appeals were formally

lodged on Wednesday, 16th September and accompanying them was the following 'open letter':

'We the undersigned disciplined students wish to appeal against the recent disciplinary proceedings which we have been involved in. We appeal not only against the severity of the sentences but against our conviction on the charge of "misconduct". We do this on the grounds that we do not believe there were any reasonable grounds for the Discipline Committee to convict us or to hand down any penalties whatsoever. The whole proceedings were completely unjust and can only be seen as an attempt to suppress left-wing activity on this campus.

We also wish to request that the appeal take the form of a mass democratic hearing in which the whole university has the opportunity to vote on the verdict and penalty. Such a hearing has already been overwhelmingly supported by M.A.S. and as far as we are concerned is the only way that we can be assured of a fair and just hearing. This is particularly true since the majority of Council members have strong links with big business and definitely support the strengthening of links between Monash and industry: they therefore cannot be expected to act in an impartial way towards students who have been disciplined for disrupting industry on campus. In short, we feel that Council is in no position to judge us and should therefore hand over its power in this matter to the whole university . . . thousands of whom have already shown an interest.

Furthermore, we request that the appeal be heard immediately. Already exams are approaching and we feel that it is necessary for the decision on the Appeal to be made before the majority of the university is too

bogged down in exams to take an interest. The past record of the Discipline Committee has been one of stalling all decisions of importance to times when the majority of students are not around and cannot protest against any injustice which may have occurred. In any case this is such a vital issue that it should not be shelved even for a day or two.

'We have appealed mainly because we feel that the majority of Monash students want us to. We have not appealed because we have any particular faith in the glorious justice of Council. We are relying on the willingness of staff and students to fight injustice rather than on the likelihood of injustice not occurring.'

This statement was signed by each of the expelled students and delivered to the secretary of Council. It was also published in *Print*.

## **THE GREAT DEBATE**

Thursday, 17th September was a turning point in the campaign. The Administration (probably believing the height of the storm to have passed) agreed to attend a public debate on the whole question . . . providing no expelled students were members of the M.A.S. debating side. This debate took place in the Alexander Theatre and was relayed to other lecture theatres. During the debate, the Administration side consistently refused to attempt to justify the expulsions; instead they concentrated on the 'plot to wreck the university' theme.

It was here that Matheson made his classic 'analysis' — 'It all started with *Print*' — and then went on to say that Monash had never been the same since a 'small minority' of students collected money for the 'Viet Cong' (his words) in 1967. This

debate helped the anti-expulsion movement immeasurably! Many students left the debate feeling that Admin had been 'caught out' on several lies and distortions. Professor Selby Smith claimed that Left-wing student newsheets had been 'consistently lying'. At first he refused to give any examples but when the whole audience began jeering and an interjector called out 'prove it', he made three claims. The first was that *Print* had been lying when it stated that a girl had been hit over the head with a chair by an Administration bureaucrat during the invasion of the Administration basement on Boycott day. At this point a girl jumped up in the audience and called out, 'That girl was *me* . . . I was hit over the head with a chair.' (The same girl later visited him with a number of witnesses and succeeded in convincing him, but he still refused to make a public retraction.) Secondly he claimed that *Print* had again been lying when it alleged that a police photographer was inside the Administration building and photographing students through the windows on Boycott day. He was stumped when it was pointed out to him that no press photographers had been allowed in the Administration building on Boycott day and that this same man had attempted to arrest a Monash student at a recent anti-conscription demonstration. Thirdly he claimed that the *P.A.C. Research Bulletin* was lying when it claimed that a student had only been fined \$10 for knocking someone unconscious by dropping a missile from the top of the Menzies Building. This *did* happen but the Research Bulletin's 'mistake' was that nobody was disciplined for it! Next day P.A.C. published a retraction of the \$10 fine allegation.

Matheson too based his little speech on a series of what left-wingers politely defined as 'untruths'. He started by 'justifying' the expulsions with a statement that violence had characterized the C. & A. Occupation and in particular that a '60-year-old staff member' had been knocked over



and kicked. Not only did the incident never occur but even the Discipline Committee and all its right-wing witnesses never found such an incident to have occurred. In fact the prosecution never even alleged that such a thing had happened and there was no reference to it in the transcript of the trial.

Both Matheson and Selby Smith were then questioned extensively on all these things. At this time another issue was also raised . . . that of collaboration between the University and the Special Branch of the Police Force. A student alleged that during a trial at Oakleigh Court where an ex-student was being prosecuted by Administration for 'damaging a wall', the University Legal Officer was seen in consultation with an extremely well-known Special Branch cop (Bob Larkins). Matheson became extremely annoyed at the implication that the Administration was involved in giving information about student rebels to police and called on the Legal Officer to refute it. Mr. Stewart (Legal Officer) then stood up rather embarrassedly and admitted that he had talked to 'a man known as Bob Larkins' but had not realized at the time that he was talking to a Special Branch policeman!

By this time the whole debate was going rather badly for the Administration. An expelled student stood up to ask a question but rather unfortunately lost his temper and called Matheson 'a fool'. Grasping desperately at this straw, Matheson jumped up from his seat and after announcing that he refused to debate further with such rude people, stomped off the stage.

A large proportion of the audience remained after the debate and discussed the future of the campaign. Again the question of occupying Administration was raised, this time with much more support. Admin's exposure at the debate

had convinced a whole new batch of students that direct, decisive action would have to be taken against the authorities.

The day after the debate was Moratorium day and the majority of the university was on strike. It was not until Monday that the movement for occupation began to build up.

## **END OF DIALOGUE**

To the surprise of most students who had expected the usual tactical stalling, the expelled students' letter appeared to bear results and Admin announced that the Appeals would be held on Thursday, 24th September. Since this was now only four days away, it was decided to postpone further discussion on the occupation until the results of this latest 'legal channel' were known.

The Appeals ended on the same day as they commenced but the Council Committee announced that they would have to consider the evidence and 'study the transcript' before a verdict could be announced. This angered radical students who now began to realize that Admin's new tactic was to stall on the verdict hoping that students would hesitate to occupy with the verdict hanging in the balance. However an M.A.S. meeting voted to consider direct action if the Appeals results had not been announced by Monday, 28th September (three days after the close of the Appeals hearing).

As expected no verdict had been announced by 1.00 p.m. on 28th, and the M.A.S. meeting called for that day voted to occupy Administration indefinitely from Tuesday, 29th if the Appeals results had still not been announced by then or were unfavourable. The tide had turned and the fight was

now really on. Legal channels were finished with as far as M.A.S. was concerned. A broadsheet entitled '*Occupation Now!*' summed up the situation.

'Students are asking themselves in connection with the proposed occupation, "Is it worth it?" "Is it worth disobeying the notices banning entry and the edicts opposing our right to assemble in what once used to be a University building?" "Is it worth risking the possibility of further discipline, more expulsions, a harder crackdown?" In our view the answer is contained in the question itself. We cannot sit back and allow Matheson and Administration to impose their law and order through threats . . . if we refuse to act for fear of being repressed then we have already been repressed. If we cannot demonstrate against unjust expulsions for fear of more unjust expulsions then what hope is there for the future? Acceptance would mean that we can never do more than carry pious resolutions at M.A.S. meetings while Administration maintains its absolute right to do what it likes and expel whom it likes . . . an effective mass occupation will make it difficult for Administration to expel anybody . . . and more to the point IT WILL MAKE MONASH A PLACE IT IS WORTH NOT BEING EXPELLED FROM.'

The motions passed by the meeting were as follows:

1. That this student general meeting deeply regrets the Administration's failure to announce the result of the appeal, against the unjust exclusions. In view of the fact that today was the deadline for reinstatement, we can only conclude that the Administration had decided to delay the announcing of an unpopular decision until exams.

## 1.1 ACTION

We are left with no other channel except direct action: therefore we resolve (conditional on at least 200 students being willing to participate) that the Administration building shall be occupied by M.A.S.

## 1.2 CONDITIONS OF OCCUPATION

1.2.1 Facilities for food, sleep, recreation and study will be provided by M.A.S.

1.2.2 Union duplicating facilities shall be made available on the same basis as for the Moratorium to produce broadsheets for the campaign.

1.2.3 It shall be an official M.A.S. activity with daily general meetings on the steps of Administration to determine the nature and length of the occupation.

1.2.4 It shall be non-violent. The Administration is requested to assist this by allowing students to enter the building peacefully (if any damage to property is necessary to effect entry, the responsibility will be with Administration; however the full cost will be paid by students).

## 1.3 PROTECTION, DISCIPLINE

1.3.1 In order to prevent further singling out of 'ring-leaders', signed statements of complicity shall be collected from as many students as are willing to sign.

1.3.2 Cameras shall be kept away from the building.

## 1.4 FURTHER DEADLINE

1.4.1 We appeal to the University to consider the seriousness of the situation they are creating and resolve to postpone direct action until an M.A.S. meeting tomorrow lunchtime. If the Appeals Committee has not taken this last opportunity to re-instate all the excluded students, the occupation will take place automatically.

## MOTION TWO

2. That a joint delegation from A.E., P.A.C., and the M.A.S. discipline Committee inform Administration of today's decisions and obtain a reply; the rest of the meeting shall break up into groups to organize for the occupation tomorrow.

With the passing of the occupation motion a new enthusiasm and determination to win was engendered.

Next day, the right wing got organized. Apparently they had been taken by surprise when the occupation motion was passed, having been suffering from some sort of illusion that the campaign had 'died out'. Hysterical broadsheets carrying the familiar cliches and catch cries — 'minorities', 'brink of crisis', 'violence', low value of degrees' — were distributed around the campus. In particular there was one which consisted solely of the following words in enormous black letters: 'THERE WILL BE AN OCCUPATION TODAY UNLESS *YOU* ATTEND TODAY'S M.A.S. MEETING . . . YESTERDAY A STUDENT GENERAL MEETING DECIDED THAT THERE WILL BE AN AUTOMATIC, INDEFINITE, OCCUPATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. THIS WILL TAKE PLACE UNLESS YOU EXERCISE YOUR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT TO PREVENT THIS. THE OCCUPATION WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN THE NAME OF EVERY STUDENT IN THE UNIVERSITY. SILENCE IS CONSENT. PREVENT VIOLENCE BEFORE IT BEGINS. COME, AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS TO TODAY'S M.A.S. MEETING IN

THE UNION UPSTAIRS FOYER COMMENCING 1.05 p.m. IF YOU  
COP OUT THIS TIME YOU WILL NOT GET ANOTHER CHANCE!

These broadsheets did the trick and by 1.10 p.m. there was an enormous crowd in the union, many in a 'stop-the-Labor-Club-wrecking-the-University' spirit. It was obvious that a large part of the crowd felt hostile towards the proposed occupation and believed the right-wing propaganda about a 'small group of extremists' pushing for a 'confrontation for its own sake'. The expelled students therefore put up a proposal that the occupation be postponed until Thursday in order to give Admin yet another chance to re-instate the students and avoid an occupation. This suggestion was well received by the meeting and helped convince many students that the 'militants' were not just 'crazies' who wanted to rush into an occupation without giving Admin a chance. By postponing the occupation once again, M.A.S. was demonstrating that the final decision as to whether or not the occupation was going on rested with the Administration who only had to accede to reasonable and just demands in order to avoid the proposed direct action.

Though this meeting had originated mainly as a right-wing mobilization it ended up giving solid backing to an occupation scheduled for Thursday (Tuesday's one being postponed). People could almost be 'seen' swinging from right to left during the course of the meeting. Whereas the first motion on the agenda which called on M.A.S. to oppose any occupation in principle was only narrowly lost, the final motion, calling for an indefinite occupation beginning 1.00 p.m. Thursday, was carried overwhelmingly with clear support from the block of people which had previously voted to condemn all occupations.

Immediately after this meeting the Professorial Board organized a 'debate' in the Alexander Theatre (something of

a last ditch effort to divert students from occupation). For three hours the Alexander Theatre was packed, while students argued with professors about the proposed occupation, discipline, repression, fascism, the role of the University in society, capitalism and imperialism. The thing about this forum was its solidity and militancy. People were not all ideologically united but there was a unity in struggle, a feeling that everyone was now prepared to fight to the end. The atmosphere was elating. The firm decision to occupy had had a 'liberating' effect on people as they felt for the first time the effect of their united strength.

## **OCCUPATION DAY**

Thursday, 1st October was 'O-Day'. At 9.55 am, Matheson broadcast to the library and lecture theatres, statement entitled 'The Limits of Protest'. Throughout the morning at regular intervals this speech was replayed over the P.A. system in the Union. Students relaxing in the upstairs foyer or cafeteria would hear a short crackle followed by a distinctly Mathesonian accent apparently coming at them from nowhere 'While no-one wishes to silence the dissenting voices, the interruption of the work of the University, for example by occupying offices of buildings, will be regarded as misconduct and any offenders will be prosecuted according to our own disciplinary procedures or in the public courts . . . "minority group' . . . 'threats' serious situation' . . . 'dissent within limits'. There was no escape from J. A. L. Matheson's interpretation of the democratic 'process'.

Some broadsheets among the many distributed on 'O-Day' had correctly predicted that Louis Matheson would make this type of last minute appeal to students, and that it would be seen and heard only on closed circuit T.V. with no live student audience to answer to.

At 1.00 p.m. the Appeals Committee had still not announced the result of the hearing and students began gathering on the Administration steps in order to begin the occupation. The atmosphere was more tense and determined than at any previous demonstration or sit-in against Administration. Students regarded this as the most important mass action in the history of Monash. For weeks the student body had been approaching this day step by step, now the decisive step was about to be taken. Side by side with the battle against Administration, a less dramatic struggle had been going on within the student body itself. Basically this had been between moderates and revolutionaries; between those who had felt that Administration was 'reasonable' and would eventually listen to 'logical argument', and those who believed that Administration was firmly on the side of imperialism and reaction and so would have to be forced to back down. Now, as the campaign ended its fifth week, more and more students had come to the realization that Administration had to be fought rather than debated with.

There seems little doubt that the incredible speed with which the campaign had matured, the enormous volume of work and general activity which had nurtured it, was due to the fact that the struggle had not been 'run from the top' by a small number of student leaders but had been firmly in the hands of the rank and file of M.A.S. The tremendous resources of initiative, enthusiasm, strength and dedication which Monash students possessed, had been tapped for the first time. A good working relationship had replaced the 'Preacher-congregation' relation which had previously dominated political campaigns at Monash. Thus the one thousand or so committed students themselves took on the job of involving less interested students in the struggle. Throughout the campaign so far there had been a core of about 500 students actively involved in faculty groups, broadsheet groups, M.A.S. groups. From these people the



campaign radiated out-wards, gaining momentum as this central group became more militant. Twenty-four academic days since the campaign had begun with a mass rally in the Union the first occupation was about to begin and the atmosphere was electric. Now that 'O-Day' had finally arrived, the intensity, determination and enthusiasm of the several thousand students who had so far been involved could really be felt, and all of them took heart from the sense of comradeship in uniting for a common cause.

After a fairly long rally at which students from La Trobe University spoke in support of the Monash students' struggle and other speakers pointed out that the occupation could be a real blow against the growth of fascism and repression in the community outside as well as at Monash itself, an M.A.S. official announced that the occupation would begin.

According to M.A.S. policy, the participation of at least 200 students was necessary for the action to be an official M.A.S. one, so M.A.S. officials were assigned to count the numbers entering the building. As the first line of students approached the front doors it was noticed that each door had a small notice attached to it which stated that the doors were open but any student entering without permission would be breaching university discipline. After twelve whole months of locked doors, extra security guards, special internal walls, Admin had opened its doors . . . for an occupation!

Any fears that there would not be 200 students prepared to stick their necks out by occupying proved unfounded. 'Complicity Forms' were handed out and 320 occupiers signed them thus indicating that they were prepared to face the discipline committee if it became necessary to protect victimized 'ringleaders' in this way. Everyone was in high

spirits and convinced that victory was near. Out-side, however, it was a different story.

With at least 500 of the most militant and active students safely inside the Administration building, the M.A.S. officialdom decided to hold an M.A.S. meeting 'to decide the future of the occupation' (which was then approximately 15 minutes old).

Throughout the whole campaign the M.A.S. student bureaucracy had been reluctant to actively co-operate with students in implementing official M.A.S. policy. The latest obstructionist activity had been the announcement by the Chairman, Brian Candler, and other members of the Administrative Executive, that they were 'on strike' as a personal protest against the M.A.S. occupational policy. (The most logical thing for them to have done under these circumstances would have been to resign.) Thus the meeting was chaired by a member of the A.E. who proceeded to bungle the meeting in a way that was extremely unfavourable to the occupiers.

The whole meeting lasted little longer than 15 minutes. During this time not one person was permitted by the chairman to speak in favour of the occupation (though eight applied to speak). When the vote was taken the number of students inside the Administration building was not counted though the Chairman claimed that he had made an estimate of their numbers added to those voting in favour of the occupation. Consequently the official result of the meeting was that M.A.S. withdrew support from the occupation.

A broadsheet '*Facts Speak*' published by the Arts Faculty Action Group described the meeting thus:

## 'THE CONDUCT OF YESTERDAY'S M.A.S. MEETING WAS IMPROPER BECAUSE:

- (a) There were speakers against but not for the occupation.
- (b) The way the division was decided was insidious. The Chairman attempted to visualize how the 500 would look added to the crowd supporting the occupation outside, but this was an impossible task (with outsiders present and numbers extremely close), the ruling in favour of the opposers of the occupation could not be taken as valid.
- (c) Since large numbers of the students present are not in the habit of attending meetings and could not know all the issues involved, it was essential that *both sides be heard*. As the most fervent supporters of student rights in this university, and those students most committed to an act of conscience in the light of recent heinous events were already in the Administration building, this could not happen unless the M.A.S. executives (those not on strike) supported the democratic right of the occupiers to present their case. The Chairman did not concede them this right.
- (d) The M.A.S. executive took the deplorable decision to go on strike before the occupation and student meeting occurred. Hence the meeting was conducted by only one executive member . . what right have these students to desert their responsibilities as our elected reps?'

A completely dishonest report in the *Herald* (1st October) stated that there were 8000 students at the meeting and implied that the occupiers had entered the building *after* the vote against the occupation. Clearly the *Herald* was

trying to gain credibility for its thesis of a disruptive minority.

Despite the withdrawal of M.A.S. support the occupation went on even though the first hour a heated discussion took place about the correct course of action. In the end the vast majority of the occupiers decided the matter quite firmly by voting that they would *not* leave the building because they felt that it was both morally and tactically justified to carry on. The argument against continuing to occupy had been that it might split the united front with the occupiers becoming irrevocably split from the more conservative sections of the university population outside. This argument turned out to be completely wrong.

As soon as it had been decided that the occupation should continue, and work-groups had been formed, it was agreed that the most important thing to do was to produce broadsheets for the rest of the campus, schools, factories and railway stations. One was addressed

'To University Staff':

'In discussion over direct action like this occupation of Administration, a point which worries us is that the workers in Administration will misinterpret our actions. If there is one thing we want to get across it is that anything interpreted as violence is not directed at the workers, it is directed at those who have made this building into a fortress as a way of frustrating mass action by students . . . we believe that we (students and workers) ultimately have a common aim . . . to change this society so that it works for the people and not for the big businesses who control this university so that it produces specialised workers for *their* profit, for their system. . . There are a lot of artificial and real barriers

constructed, not just between students and workers, but also between different types of workers. Those in factories and those in offices are not the same, it is true . . . but both are in the same position of working for a business or an Administration which benefits them *as little as it can possibly get away with*. The Monash Administration would like to see these barriers maintained for their own safety . . . we see the necessity of breaking them down.'

As well as broadsheets to campus workers, and to the public outside Monash, the usual daily *Print*, two general 'on-campus sheets', there were leaflets produced by faculty groups in Medicine, Economics and Politics, Science and Engineering. One important aspect of this occupation was the assertion by those occupying that *they* were running the campaign. At general meetings of the occupiers everyone wanted to speak, put forward ideas and the 'old guard' activists found themselves swamped by new people, all prepared to play a leading role in keeping the struggle going.

A meeting of the occupiers decided on Friday morning that the occupation should end at 1.00 pm that day with a mass rally in the Alexander Theatre. It was also decided that a motion to re-occupy should be put before an M.A.S. meeting on Tuesday if all the expelled students had not been re-admitted by this time. Some students opposed the ending of the occupation at this time proposing that it should continue all weekend. This argument was defeated by pointing out that the struggle should be a protracted one using tactics as flexible as possible. Administration should never be given the chance to concentrate all its forces on a few people and for this reason the guerilla tactic of 'advancing', 'attacking' and then withdrawing before the enemy had had a chance to fire back would be more effective.

## **APPEALS RESULTS**

Late on Monday, 5th October the results of the Appeals to Council were announced. The appeals of two students were upheld on the grounds of insufficient evidence. This evidence was however, enough to convict them initially. There had been a slight reduction in the sentences. Three of the students who had been excluded for twelve months were to have their sentences 'suspended' as from the first day of the 1971 Academic Year. The four other students, one having a 12 month suspended exclusion, one expelled for two years and the other two for life, had no change made to their sentences.

## **THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES . . .**

A big printed broadsheet headed '*Keep up the Fight*' appeared on Tuesday morning calling on students to occupy indefinitely:

'Of course there will always be some people who will say that it is too late to fight now or that since all channels have been exhausted there is no point in bashing our heads against a brick wall. Generally these will be the same people who said that we should not act until we had been through all the channels and that this would *not* cause undue delay. It will be the dishonest people, the Candler's and the La Pirow's. not the mass of students who did not support action earlier because they still believed that "legal methods" led somewhere. Nor will there be many students who still fear occupation because of the "Violence" and Administration's threats of more discipline. Last Thursday's occupation laid these myths to rest and really showed up the weakness of Administration when faced with truly mass action. Not only students but junior staff (tutors) will be occupying

this time and at least one senior lecturer has announced his intention of joining in. Administration is now totally isolated at Monash and can undoubtedly be forced to give in.'

The piecemeal victory of slight reductions in the sentences of three students gave students a brief taste of real victory and they were convinced that even these small concessions would not have been made without Thursday's occupation, and more importantly, without the continual threat of mass rebellion hanging over Administration's head. At an M.A.S. meeting at lunchtime on Tuesday (attended by about 3500 students) a motion for indefinite re-occupation of the Admin building was carried. This time solid support from M.A.S. was definitely behind the occupying students.

About 3000 students went straight from the meeting (which had been held outside) to the Administration building. As the first students arrived it was observed that the steps of the building were packed with professors and deans: (Later it was explained by one staff member that when it looked as though the occupation motion was definitely going to be carried, an announcement had been made in the Staff Faculty Club for all good loyal staff members to go over to Administration to 'guard' it from student attack.)

The Committee of Deans had decided to lock the doors of Administration over-ruling a decision of the Professorial Board to leave them open.

For several minutes thousands of students milled around.

In the midst of all this confusion, Dr. Matheson swept up the steps, seized a megaphone and said something to the effect of 'I order you to fall back! If this occupation continues I will go to the Supreme Court and get an injunction against all

students participating!' The crowd continued to surge forward and as he left, Dr. Matheson retorted 'Well I'm going to the Supreme Court right now, our lawyers have been working on the case all morning.'

At that moment there was a crash which sounded distinctly like the breaking of glass, and a few minutes later a group of students appeared from around the side of the building and announced that there was a 'way in' through a side door. Everyone flowed around to the side and began entering through a broken door thus avoiding any direct confrontation with patriotic senior staff. (This broken door was later paid for by a collection taken up from the occupiers . . . the breaking of the door was regarded as 'no crime at all'.) When a fair number of students had entered, the front doors were opened from inside, professors gave up their intimidation policy and the rest of the students came in through the normal entrance.

The first thing to be discussed by the students inside the building was the question of Matheson's Court Injunction. It was explained that an Injunction is a legal order restraining certain named persons from doing a particular thing, in this case entering the Monash Administration building. Breaking such a court order is regarded as 'contempt of court' and can lead to an automatic gaol sentence, either for a stipulated period of time or until an 'apology' is made to the court.

After this had been made clear to everyone, a vote was taken to find out how many people would defy such an injunction. The vote in favour of outright defiance was overwhelming.

This occupation was far more serious than the first one. Not only had the building been broken into in the face of a



personal ban on entry from Dr. Matheson himself, but it could be seen from the Administration's rather frenzied reaction, that the full force of the State (police, courts) combined with Administration discipline could well be brought down on each and every student involved. That this did not happen, despite the fact that things were moving fast ;n this direction with Dr. Matheson's departure for the Supreme Court, seems directly attributable to the solid militancy of the occupying students. The wisest members of Administration realized the significance of this, that even if the anti-expulsion movement was physically crushed by the use of brute State force, this would be a hollow victory. Using the courts against a relatively isolated minority is one thing, using them against a united and determined movement is another.

Early in the evening, Court injunctions were served on several individual students. By some strange coincidence the Administration had had 'identification trouble' again and had only been able to pick out seven students, six of whom 'turned out' to be members of the original disciplined nine. These first injunctions were interlocutory injunctions banning the named students and their 'agents' from entering Administration until a 'proper' court hearing, at which Administration would apply for permanent injunctions, could be heard. The interlocutory injunctions were ceremonially burned in the Administration building amidst cheers from the students. The 'injunctioned' occupiers continued to occupy. It was probably at this point that Administration 'observers' realized that their bluff had failed and that going ahead with blatant, undisguised repression could well weaken them even more.

At 8.30 p.m. Dr. Matheson finally agreed to come to the 'negotiating table' with the occupying students — a remarkable admission of defeat. Finally agreement was

reached: the occupying students would leave the building immediately and in return Dr. Matheson would hold a referendum of the whole University on the expulsions issue and present the result to an emergency Council meeting. Matheson gave no guarantee that Council would abide by the referendum results. This was a final move. Time was the essence for the Administration, for the examinations were only two weeks away. The referendum would 'buy' several precious days, and hopefully the silent majority and the pressure of exams would defuse the situation. The students had mixed feelings. Some had wanted to force the issue by staying in the building until the police were inevitably called. But others insisted on leaving, realizing that while the promise of the Council meeting could be nothing more than a play for time, it would force one thing — the Council to show its hand.

The press reacted with a vehement nation-wide attack on the occupation. Obviously syndicated reports appeared in all newspapers from the '*West Australian*' to the Brisbane '*Courier Mail*', which carried the heading 'Fists, Bricks Fly in "Battle of Monash".' Phrases like 'violence flared', 'ugly incidents', 'students stoned photographers' and 'an administration official, face bruised and clothing torn' recurred over and over.

Not even the Administration accused occupiers of the sort of 'ugly incidents' described in these newspaper reports. An enormous M.A.S. meeting several days later condemned the papers for their 'dishonesty' and threatened to take legal action against them.

Next day, Dr. Matheson called a meeting of the whole University including campus workers, who were given time off to come. It was estimated that over 90% of people on campus at the time attended this meeting . . . it was

gigantic. The queue of people waiting to speak at the microphone numbered close to seventy. This meeting voted almost unanimously against Dr. Matheson's proposed voting formula which consisted of only one question: 'Should the expelled students be given clemency?' (This would have allowed Council to technically abide by the results by only minimally reducing the length of the expulsions.) Instead students supported a voting formula which involved five alternatives: (1) Should the sentences stand? (2) Should they be harsher? (3) Should they be reduced while still retaining some exclusions? (4) Should there be fines only? (5) Should there have been no punishment at all?

## **THE MAJORITY SPEAKS**

The referendum was held the next day, 8th October. The '*Herald*' in an editorial (7th October) headed 'Monash Must Speak Now' said:

'The time would now appear to have come . . . when the silent majority of the University's students must speak, or forever be at the mercy of a minority band of anarchistic agitators . . . utilising the rabble rousing methods of anarchistic manipulation the minority prevails, to the detriment of the whole University. The silent majority must show them for what they are . . . unrepresentative, self-interested trouble-makers.'

D.L.P. leader Frank Dowling called for a public enquiry into 'violence racked' Monash and La Trobe Universities, and for the replacement of Dr. Matheson.

Many broadsheets came out on the day of the referendum:

'Yes, some radicals have stuck their necks out to make a point for all of us. We have two choices. We can cut their necks off, or we can join them, each in our own way, and

make a stand for our beliefs. Just remember one thing, the world must be in a bad way if it is necessary to expel the most sensitive and dedicated people from our universities. (Extract from *A Final Plea to the Jury*, written and produced by a post graduate Science student.)

Other broadsheets predicted that Council would reject the results of the referendum altogether.

'Reports already received indicate that many Council members are furious with Dr. Matheson for accepting the occupiers' demand that a general meeting of the whole university be held, followed by an emergency Council meeting. It is therefore very much on the cards that Council will reject the referendum altogether.

Already the Chancellor (Sir Douglas Menzies) has indicated that he will be against receiving the delegation to be elected today (alongside the referendum). Of course Dr. Matheson will explain the reason for giving in: he will explain that the depth of opposition among both students and staff has gone far beyond anything that the administration had ever expected to occur so close to the exams, he will point out that every possible threat, including discipline, Supreme Court injunctions, locked doors and physical violence has been tried and failed to dissuade those students and staff who had decided on direct action, he will recommend that Council should make a tactical retreat in the face of this overwhelming opposition. However, even if Council accepts this we can be sure that they will go only as far as they believe university opinion has forced them to. If the university does not vote overwhelmingly against the current sentences then THE SENTENCES WILL STAND because Council will

believe (wrongly) that it can safely ride out the storm ignoring a narrow minority.' (From the broadsheet *Fines*.)

There was a large press coverage of the voting in the referendum with reports that it was 'peaceful' as if to suggest that referenda at Monash are usually accompanied by riots.

The silent majority *did* speak, but not as an echo of the *Herald*. The results of the referendum were as follows: of the total 7620 votes cast, 61% wanted some reduction in penalties. Of the 5881 student votes, 67% wanted some reduction, 51% wanting fines only, or no penalty at all. Of the 1739 staff votes, 51% wanted the penalties to stand.

A delegation of five was elected to make representations to Council. When Council met that evening, only one member of the delegation was permitted to enter the meeting and make a brief statement (after being kept waiting outside for several hours). The seven expelled students appeared before the Council meeting and read out a statement requesting that Council abide by majority university opinion and reiterating their determination to keep on struggling against imperialism. All this time students were waiting in the Union for the result of the Council meeting, most of them expecting victory. As the evening drew on, several hundred students drifted over to the Administration building to await the announcement. It was after midnight when the decision finally came through. Students watching through the glass doors of the locked and guarded Administration building began to suspect that they had been 'sold out' when they saw Council members coming down the stairs and going out the back door instead of the front where they would have had to face the students. After all the Council members had left the University Public Relations Officer made the Council decision public to the waiting students and pressmen.

Council had only passed one motion, and this was: 'That Council will not interfere with the penalties imposed by the Appeals Committee.' Voting was unanimous. Bob Hawke, 'left-winger', joined with the industrialists, business men and academics who comprise the Monash Council and spurned majority opinion.

A statement by the Vice-Chancellor (16th October) said, 'The final decision may not be well-received by all members of the University, but it should be accepted as the verdict of a body that has to take outside opinion and other considerations into account . .

The broadsheets being distributed around campus the -- next day were furious. One, headed 'Black Friday' . . . ended:

*'Thirty Council members spat in the faces of these seven, the five man delegation and four thousand six hundred and twenty four members of this university.*

*It therefore can finally be concluded that at this juncture the notions of "democracy" and of "justice" are cries that do not belong to the rulers of this university: rather, the "iron fist" and "repression" are the catch cries of our "honourable men".'*

As if to add insult to injury, the university also announced its intention of persisting with the injunctions on the grounds that the students might 're-occupy'. (Smart thinking!) The seven students were thus forced to go semi-underground in an attempt to avoid being served with Court Summonses. Eventually all the summonses were served.

The *Herald*, which had played such a large part in attempting to manipulate outside opinion, was predictably quiet on the result of the referendum, and on Council's rejection of it. Instead, it played up a motion of confidence in

Dr. Matheson which was passed at an M.A.S. meeting held the next day. However this 'motion of confidence' was no more than a reply to Frank Dowling of the D.L.P., who had called for the removal of Dr. Matheon, and his replacement by an even tougher administrator, perhaps a top Public Service or Education Department official. Instead of correctly explaining this confidence motion as a rejection of the D.L.P., the *Herald* managed to imply that the students all loved their Vice-Chancellor. The part of the motion that read, 'if Dr. Matheson is removed, we will immediately consider a general strike of the whole university' was not stressed.

Other motions passed overwhelmingly at this meeting, which was the biggest M.A.S. meeting ever held (5-6000) and comprised over 70% of the student body on campus that day, were:

(1) that Council immediately resign, being composed of 'incredibly arrogant men; and a group that does not correctly represent this university and its interests.'

(2) that the injunctions on the seven students be immediately withdrawn because they were 'a totally provocative action designed to intimidate opposition to the unjust expulsions and suspensions.'

(3) that M.A.S. allocate \$420 for the insertion of a half-page advertisement in the *Age*.

(4) that the mass media be condemned for their dishonest coverage of the 6th October occupation.

An occupation motion was also put to this meeting, but it was lost. At least 2000 additional students had now entered the campaign, and most of these were still doubtful about occupation as a tactic.

Reports in the papers ignored what the 'silent majority' at Monash was now saying, and concentrated on the 'human stories', with feature articles on Dr. Matheson, Brian Candler (moderate M.A.S. Chairman) and Warren Mann (head of the C. & A. Office). There was no mention that an enormous meeting of Monash students had condemned the press coverage of the occupation.

In court, on Monday, 12th October, Mr. Justice Pape granted the authorities a continuing permanent injunction against five students, restraining them from entering the Administration building without permission from the Vice-Chancellor or his representative. (These injunctions are still in force, but have been ignored. Ed.) On the same day, an M.A.S. meeting, again very large (4500-5000), took a very important decision. A right-wing motion was put up stating that 'there will at no time be an occupation of university property without the explicit support of more than 50% of the student body.' This motion was decisively defeated. Students saw through it and realized that though it appeared to be an 'extension of democracy' it was in reality an attempt to hamstring M.A.S. and prevent it using what was a legitimate tactic in struggle. The defeat of this motion was a basic re-affirmation of support for the M.A.S. system continuing to operate on the basis that well publicized meetings of all *interested* students could make decisions. As one speaker said, 'concerned students should not be prevented from taking important and urgent decisions just because of the apathy of others, and in any case, if a minority did do anything 'crazy' then a majority of students would soon be down on the lawns voting them down.'

This meeting also voted overwhelmingly in favour of a mass 'sit-out' to be held outside the Administration building to stop Council members entering, as Council was meeting that day.



Several thousand students gathered outside the Administration building only to be told that Council had decided not to meet on campus that day. A 'leak' from Administration informed students of the off-campus address where the meeting was being held, so a car cavalcade set off to find them. When the honourable men were finally discovered at their secret meeting place, their meeting was disrupted while students informed them of some M.A.S. opinions. An M.A.S. meeting held the next day refused to condemn the actions of this small group of students, despite right-wing motions to that effect. This however did not stop the *Herald* and the *Age* from misrepresenting what had occurred in headlines reporting '800 students say sorry', and 'we regret it . . . students.' (13th and 14th October.) Perhaps the most bigoted attack occurred on 13th October, in *The Gippsland Times*.

'It is vicious and utterly wrong that decent Australians should be denied the opportunity of university education, while malcontents, mostly communistic in their sympathies, and *many alien in their origin*, should be occupying places that rightfully should be occupied by Australians.' (Our emphasis . . . Ed.)

On 13th October, the campaign was officially closed for 1970 and students settled in for examinations. But Dr. Matheson was not satisfied.

# VACATION DISCIPLINE

On 23rd November, 1970, notices were sent to thirty-two students informing them that they were to be charged for participating in the occupations of 1st and 6th October. Dr. Matheson claimed that the charges were not laid earlier (that is during term) because he did not wish to add to students' worries at the time, perhaps jeopardizing their exam results!

The whole university was aghast at the laying of the charges. It appeared to be a provocative attempt to stir up trouble. This time Dr. Matheson had personally instituted the proceedings. The Professorial Board refused to endorse his action, and even the reactionary Committee of Deans was divided on the question (on 'tactical' grounds). A number of student and official University bodies also opposed the charges. These included the conservative Union Board, the Orientation Week Committee, the Monash Research Students Association, Staff Socialists. The Australian Union of Students and the Melbourne University S.R.C.

In *Sound* No. 9, Matheson attempted to justify his decisions.

'The decision was a difficult one and I am conscious of strong argument on both sides; I am quite sure that it would not have been *right* simply to drop the matter. It is a pity that so much time has gone by since the incidents took place but this was inevitable as it did not seem fair to make accusations of misconduct against students during the examinations and so add to their worries.

. . . The moral argument that students must somehow be brought to a realization that it is wrong to press their contentions to the point of violence must surely prevail. Unless the whole University comes to agree that there are limits beyond which protest must not go, then we shall certainly have to live indefinitely in a state of conflict; while it is possible to adjust to almost anything, given the fortunate resilience of the human spirit, most of us prefer our University to be a place of scholarship not a laboratory for experiments in revolutionary politics.

. . . But my conscience tells me that it is not right that those who work in the Offices, and upon whom we rely for the effective running of the University's administrative machine, should be subjected to the sort of things that they had to put up with last term.

For me to have taken no action would have been tantamount to my deciding on a wholesale acquittal. And this I was not ready to do.'

This 'justification' did not convince anybody, and for the first time ever a student campaign was launched during the long vacation. An initial meeting on Tuesday, 1st December was held in a lecture theatre and over 200 students and staff turned up. This meeting called on students to withdraw their representatives from committees engaged in liaison work with the Administration. Subsequently P.A.C. instructed its committee on the Staff-Student Assembly not to negotiate with the Vice-Chancellor. A meeting of the Committee of Representatives passed a motion calling on student representatives to boycott meetings of all university committees other than Union committees. A *Lot's Wife* broadsheet was brought out to inform re-enrolling students

of the charges, and to advertise an official M.A.S. rally called for Tuesday, 15th December at 7.00 p.m.

Meetings of around 100 were held on Tuesday nights until Christmas. Ted Bull, Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation, came to several of them and he and a dozen rank and file wharfies attended the M.A.S. rally to demonstrate their solidarity with the Monash struggle. Students subsequently spoke at job site meetings on the wharves where strike and black ban motions were passed. Ted Bull later wrote to Dr. Matheson to convey the views of the wharfies:

'Dear Sir,

The trials of Monash students being conducted at the present time at Monash University, are causing great consternation down at the waterfront.

The students' case and what has happened to them so far has been outlined to many shipside meetings and canteen meetings of the waterside workers, tally clerks, and Harbour Trust workers, the vast majority, of course, being waterside workers.

The facts of the case as presented by the students, leads one to the inescapable conclusion that justice and democracy are not being extended to the students. Resolutions from these jobs calling for a 24-hour stopwork in support of these students, convey to me the seriousness with which the workers regard these trials.

The latest unanimous resolutions from the jobs (18 Victoria Dock. 20 Victoria Dock. 22 Victoria Dock, Princes Pier and Appleton Dock) have forced me to convey to you the feelings of my membership. In three of the resolutions, my members have called on me to take this

case to the 26 so-called Rebel Unions, to see what they think about the whole situation.

The officers of this branch have declared full support for the students and we hoped that this display of solidarity by citizens outside the University, must show the disciplinary board that there is great concern over this issue.

There is no doubt in the minds of the workers that the impartiality of the disciplinary board is suspect. We, as some of the people who are paying for the upkeep of the University. call on you to terminate the trials, and let the students carry on with the studies that they wish to pursue, because in the final analysis their ability will be put to the beneficial interests of the vast majority of this country.

Yours faithfully,

(signed) A. E. Bull,

Secretary. 23/12/70'

Students decided that it was of the utmost importance to stall the hearings until first term so that there would be students around to fight against a purge. It was therefore decided to apply for an adjournment on the reasonable grounds that it was difficult to contact witnesses during the vacation and most of the accused had jobs which they would have to give up if they were required to come to Monash each day (the trials would probably last some time!) Other students also wanted to challenge the legality of the Discipline Statute in the Supreme Court. Many of the accused did not hold any hopes that the Courts would support them against the Administration and some quite strongly opposed the idea at first. Eventually, however,

unity was reached when those who opposed this legal channel agreed that whatever the result, the trials would probably be delayed until first term, and the sooner all legal channels are actually proved to be useless, the better. A Q.C.'s opinion was obtained on the constitutional validity of the Statute and the possibility of getting a Supreme Court injunction to prevent the hearings continuing until the Statute had been challenged in the Supreme Court. He said the students had a good case for an injunction, and a 60% chance of winning the challenge to the validity of the Statute. When the Discipline Committee met, it granted a one week adjournment in order to enable students to seek the injunction.

The writ against the University and the members of the Discipline Committee was heard before Mr. Justice Gowans in the Practices Court on Friday 11th and Monday 14th December, and to the students' surprise the University produced a Q.C. of their own.

In his summation. Justice Gowans ruled that:

(a) Kearney (Q.C.) had shown that there was a serious prima facie case, but had not shown to his satisfaction that it had a good chance of succeeding in the Supreme Court. He did not, as Administration have since interpreted this ruling, uphold the validity of the Statute; he merely confirmed that a 'good' case would not be good enough for students to win the Supreme Court case against the University;

(b) for the injunction to have been granted, Kearney would have to have proven that students would suffer irreparable harm if the hearings continued, and this he had not done. (Taking advantage of an inadequacy in the affidavits, he ruled that harm was not proven.)

Thus the injunction was dismissed and costs awarded against the students. The legal fight, representing the 'proper channels par excellence' was applauded and supported by many moderate students and staff. Students, who had placed their faith in the so-called 'neutrality of the courts', now realized that they must turn to people, not society's institutions for support in the struggle.

The hearings resumed at Monash on 15th December and the morning was taken up with the trial of one student who chose to be tried separately. His case was the only one completed and his sentence was a pompous reprimand (though not a 'severe' one as received by students convicted of collecting aid to the N.L.F.). One of the revealing aspects of the trial was Matheson's brief and abortive appearance as a witness. He had been called to identify some of the students but he forgot who they were! He told the committee that he had a note in his office from which he would refresh his memory. After a long, confusing, legal wrangle about whether the note was 'admissible evidence' the accused asked if they would be able to see it. 'Of course', said Mr. Williams (the Committee's Legal Adviser). The prosecutor (Mr. Stewart) then immediately withdrew Dr. Matheson as a witness.

## **THE BACKDOWN**

On 4th January, 1971, Dr. Matheson sent a letter to the accused informing them that the hearings were to be discontinued:

'In reaching this decision I have taken into account the protracted nature of the proceedings; the decision reached in the case that has been completed; and the expense incurred by those who took the proceedings to the Supreme Court.

But it should not be thought that in acting thus I am withdrawing from my view that those students who entered the University Offices on October 1st and 6th, contrary to my instructions, committed an act of misconduct and that those against whom there was a prima facie case were correctly brought before the Discipline Committee whose authority was upheld by the Supreme Court. (Refer back to the Judge's ruling—Ed.).

Your case if continued, could hardly have been concluded before mid-February and I am therefore using the occasion of the New Year to discontinue the proceedings so that as we begin in 1971, the events of 1970 can be left behind.'

In *Sound* No. 9, he had, in explaining the laying of the charges, bluntly dismissed the 'clean-slate-in-the-new-year' argument, which he said was in the minds of some people, 'reinforced by the end of term pre-Christmas euphoria.'

In a letter to the *Age*, (11th January) one of the students against whom charges had been dropped pointed out what was obviously the main reason for this . . . fear of mass student rebellion when first term commenced. 'With the hearings dragging out, Dr. Matheson obviously took fright at the possibility of the university community returning in first term before the hearings were completed. Both staff and students would then have been able to clearly express their opinion on the charges.'

But Dr. Matheson undoubtedly still faced the new year with great trepidation. Would the mass of students agree with his statement that 'as we begin in 1971 the events of 1970 can be left behind'?



The answer which he should have understood, was contained in the M.A.S. meeting at the end of third term, which resolved to suspend the struggle during the period of exams and resume it in 1971.

# 1971: THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

1971 was the first time that a student struggle at Monash 'carried over' from one year to the next. With three students still expelled at the end of 1970, Supreme Court injunctions still in force, and the Monash University Council holding 'secret' meetings off-campus for fear of student reaction to their refusal to abide by the results of the referendum, the carry over had been inevitable.

Many formerly passive students had been radicalized by their experiences in 1970. Those newly involved in organizing and agitating during third term, now swelled the numbers of the activists. But now the movement was faced by the many new first year students who knew little about what had gone before. And students were diverted away from the central struggle by a host of other activities which claimed their attention. All sorts of different radical projects got under way in the new year.

The following 'internal' Labor Club documents were published following the failure of the first M.A.S. meeting on the expulsions to even attract a quorum.

'1. *Labor Club Newsletter* 5/4/71

The Present Situation At Monash

The present situation at Monash is very good in terms of the level of political consciousness among the student body as a whole. There is little doubt that a greater political awareness and understanding than at the

beginning of any other year, or at any other time (barring 3rd term 1970) *does* exist at the present time. The question is, how can we mobilize the full potential of this situation, how can we give correct leadership?

### Lack of Unity and Direction

In third term last year, there was an underlying unity among *all* progressive students around the minimum demand of 'No Expulsions'. This demand and the resulting unity gave the campaign its impetus and its direction. We all knew just what we were aiming for in the short term and the mass of students were quite clear on this also. The unity of the Left soon developed into a united front of all advanced students who in turn became a tremendous force in winning round a majority of the more "backward" students. The underlying strength and motivating force of the whole movement came from the fact that we *did* have direction and we all agreed with that direction.

This year however that sense of direction has vanished and we have therefore been unable to begin to rebuild a strong united mass movement *around any issue*. This is not to say that the left is "split" or unable to work as a whole, on the contrary it would appear as if most left-wingers have a conscious policy of wanting to avoid splits and work together. There are more active left-wingers than ever before, more faculty groups, more small campaigns, more propaganda, more meetings, however all this activity is scattered and tends to be spasmodic and without concern for the development of the left wing movement as a whole at Monash. The conception of the "United Front" appears to have changed from that of unity of the whole left for one

particular end to one of individual groupings all "doing their own thing" *without any common aim*.

If we are to rebuild the United Front into a movement which is capable of mobilizing and giving leadership to the vast mass of Monash students who are already beginning to rebel against the status-quo, then we must decide our basis of unity, our common demands and our political work in all areas must be made to primarily serve these demands. Until we do consciously decide on a common campaign to which all of us should dedicate our political work then we will continue to rush around in a muddle-headed manner, or alternatively fall victim to subjectivism and disillusionment, and fail to successfully mobilize the majority of students. Correct leadership and conscious planning is essential to any successful struggle. At the present time we should not be blaming the lack of mass struggle on the "apathy" of students, but should recognize that the "blame" lies solely with our own shortcomings. We all know from past experience that Monash students have an "inexhaustible enthusiasm for struggle" and that periods of apparent "apathy" have almost always been due to subjectivism, liberalism and incorrect leadership from the left.

## *2. Labor Club Newsletter*

The main reason for continuing last year's struggle is the political principle involved. As a left wing movement, do we cease to fight against political repression just because we are finding it a little difficult at the present time? The left as a whole should recognise that the struggle against repression goes hand in hand with all political struggle and that the further our movement advances the more we are going to be faced with

outright fascist repression. Anyone who is attacked by the authorities must be defended to the end.

Even in pure 'tactical' terms however we should recognize: that a continuing campaign against the expulsions can achieve great success. It is a concrete issue which ALL students understand and from which they must inevitably draw conclusions as to the nature of the capitalist university . . . It is also a struggle *which we can win* and which can temporarily "insure" the movement against further expulsions. At the present time Dr. Matheson is hoping against hope that we will give up this struggle and continue to concentrate our fire away from him, he is definitely *afraid* of the possibility of further direct action and like Thompson, would probably rather give in to our demands than be faced by united revolt. (Thompson was the Education Minister forced to abandon regulations banning teachers from striking, by a general strike of teachers.—Ed.)

We *know* that students "feel strongly" about the expulsions, the question is, can we transform this "feeling" into strong action? In thinking about this we should keep in mind that there were several "low" periods in the campaign last year (quorum difficulty, etc.) but each time we *did* overcome them by correct and unified leadership.

### For a United Front Against Repression

In Australia at the moment we are faced with fascist repression of progressive forces. This has taken the form of the Summary Offences Act amendments in all states and in the Commonwealth, gaolings of draft resisters and anti-war activists, the gaoling of Norm Gallagher

and the present imprisonment of five women in Fairlea. There are many other examples.

The education system is an important part of capitalist society and here too there is widespread rebellion. The struggles of the teachers, the Prahran Tech. students, and students of the three universities are examples of this rebellion.

We are not involved simply in a struggle against the bosses of each institution, who are supposedly isolated from the rest of society; we are fighting a system which is threatened by our struggle, hence repression is used against us. Repression can only be defeated by more rebellion and this rebellion will be more effective if students can unite with other students and unite with the workers and working people.

### *Proposals*

- 1) That a campaign be started in the three universities, Tech's and High Schools including students and teachers, against repression of left-wing activity in the education system.
- 2) That the slogan and demand for this campaign be "no exclusions".
- 3) That in the immediate future attention be focused on the new Melbourne University admissions regulation, with this being linked to struggles against repression already initiated.
- 4) That a leaflet be written explaining the nature of the campaign, and distributed to all educational institutions, and wherever relevant, linking past struggles at particular places with the new campaign.

5) That a Committee composed of a representative from as many areas as is workable be established to co-ordinate activities and start the campaign going.

6) That the Monash slogans be:

1. Reinstate the expelled three
2. Fight repression
3. Smash imperialism
4. Education for the people, not the dollar.

It is also recommended that comrades keep the thought uppermost in all literature speaking etc. that the campaign is a united one, and thus activity should be conducted in the framework of the total campaign.'

After these proposals had been discussed and accepted within the left, a 'Campaign Against Repression' was initiated, embracing students of all three Victorian Universities

The first joint action proposed was a simultaneous blockade of both the Monash and La Trobe Council meetings on the afternoon of Monday, 19th April. As things turned out, the La Trobe blockade had to be postponed and only the Monash one went ahead. The La Trobe blockade, when it eventually took place, touched off a massive struggle which included several police raids on the La Trobe campus, the expulsions of dozens of students, the fining of scores, and ultimately the indefinite gaoling of three for contempt of court. That struggle is still continuing and unfortunately we do not have space to include any information about it in this book. It is a story which in any case will have to be told by La Trobe students themselves.

It was in the course of this joint campaign, that students at Melbourne University became 'awake' for the first time, and a blockade of that University's Administration building took place, followed by the usual pattern of discipline trials (and more discipline trials for demonstrating against the first ones!). As with La Trobe and Monash, all sentences were announced during the vacation. It is perhaps worth mentioning that although there has always been strong ideological unity between 'Maoists' at Monash and La Trobe, there were no organizational links of any kind between the left wing movements on any of the three campuses. There is still no formal organization in Victoria and not even the beginnings of a national one. This is in one sense a weakness in the student movement which should be corrected. But on the other hand it shows the strength of a movement which relies on its base among the masses rather than on organization from 'outside'. It contrasts markedly with the paranoiac fears of the University Administrations, whose moves to erect barriers against mythical 'outside agitators' was precisely what drove the students together and resulted in the first joint actions. It also contrasts markedly with the D.L.P.-National Civic Council's policy of setting up elaborate 'front' organizations with outside financing and 'guidance' and with the sole aim of attacking leftists and seeking to take control of S.R.C.'s. Despite all the 'assistance' they receive, these groups have never got any mass support.

### **MEANWHILE BACK ON THE FARM . . .**

Before the Council meeting on 19th April, M.A.S. had met to re-affirm its intention, declared at the end of 1971, to carry on the struggle against the expulsions until final victory. The 'M.A.S. Discipline Committee' consisting of the expelled students was re-constituted, and its budget of \$500 extended. Following the resumption of the campaign by



M.A.S., 'the three' had visited Dr. Matheson to ask him whether there was any chance of Council changing its attitude. They had pointed out that in their estimate there was no doubt the campaign would reach heights similar to those of the previous year but that for their own part they would much rather spend the time and energy on more constructive involvement in off-campus protests such as the Moratorium. Dr. Matheson took this as a sign of weakness and arrogantly announced that Council would not even consider their cases unless they made 'supplication', and 'I was satisfied that the supplication was genuine'. M.A.S. rejected 'moderate' motions that the three should agree to abide by Dr. Matheson's 'Limits of Protest' supplication and instead voted to place a permanent ban on the holding of Council meetings on campus, and to back this up by physical obstruction.

In addition M.A.S. considered the *seventeenth* draft of the Monash Discipline Statute. Having already agreed to accept in principle the twelfth draft, students were surprised to find that what they had thought were 'agreements' dating back to 1968 or 1969 were broken. Not only was 'misconduct' still defined widely enough to include almost any sort of protest activity, but an ingenious system of gerrymandered 'elections' to the Discipline Committee had been established to give an appearance of 'participation' while maintaining the reality of Administration control. As a last resort, in case of a complete breakdown in Admin's control over Monash, provision was made for a Discipline Committee to consist of any five persons appointed by Administration. There was also provision for several Discipline Committees to sit simultaneously, processing 'offenders' in relay.

The Discipline Statute Drafting Committee's reply to various objections raised by M.A.S. was the usual list of quibbles and the classical comment:

'It is in any event a misrepresentation in general to suggest that any agreements have been broken by the proposed new Statute.

It has always been made clear that the Drafting Committee can only agree to make recommendations and that the final draft of the Statute must be approved and made by Council.' (*Sound* No. 23, 30th March, 1971.)

This statement finally destroyed any lingering faith students may have had that Administration were 'reason-able men' with whom one could have 'reasoned discourse' and reach 'negotiated agreement'. M.A.S. resolved not to bother discussing the Discipline Statute with Administration any further and simply announced that until an acceptable Statute was drafted and approved by M.A.S., students would take responsibility for their own discipline and would take immediate direct action in the event of any further use being made of the old Statute or of a new Statute being introduced. The Professorial Board replied that it would not attempt to meet the M.A.S. objections or stick to its original agreements, but 'Until a new Discipline Statute has been adopted, the University has no option but to retain the existing Discipline Statute'. Thus, by this decision, the Professorial Board tried to lay the responsibility on M.A.S. for subsequent expulsions by a committee of Deans operating under the old statute. Instead it meant that the University did not dare use its Discipline Statute against students blockading the Council from meeting, for fear that this would cause a greater reaction. By itself, without mass acceptance, University discipline was proved to be a 'paper tiger', and it could not be used except in conjunction with violent police intervention. Administration met the blockade with a direct threat of just such intervention, without bothering with the usual preliminaries of disciplinary

hearings. Dr. Matheson could no longer avoid a display of police power by expelling troublesome students before it became necessary.

The blockade itself was not a particularly exciting event. Students erected physical barricades against all but one of the entrances to the Administration building and formed a physical cordon at the remaining entrance to allow Administration staff through while keeping Council members out. Foreseeing this, as many Council members as possible had endeavoured to sneak into the building beforehand. Among the last to arrive was Bob Hawke of the ACTU. When accosted by students he said: 'You can't treat me like the others, I'm Bob Hawke.' The students replied that they were aware that he was indeed Bob Hawke and they were also aware that like all the other reactionary Council members he had agreed to ignore the referendum result and uphold the expulsions of 1970. They told him he would be allowed to go in if he promised to support the reinstatement of the expelled three. He left.

Where in previous years, Admin had blown up mere demonstrations near the Council meeting into major crises, their tactics this time were at first, to ignore it. It was blandly announced that Council had, after all, been able to hold a meeting. Two days later, Sound No. 27 carried a statement from Dr. Matheson under the title 'Council Again Under Duress'. The statement said that 'several Council members were roughly handled' and went on to give Dr. Matheson's usual analysis of student revolt in terms of a conspiracy by the left-wing.

'Any concession by the University is hailed as a victory for direct action, but there is no letting up of the pressure. For instance, the disciplinary charges against students who invaded the University Offices last October

were dropped and, in a public statement, I expressed the hope that this action would be interpreted as a conciliatory gesture and that a new spirit could prevail in 1971. But I might have known better: that action is now conveniently forgotten and at a general meeting on 19th April this year I am condemned ". . . for his apparent seeking to prolong the conflict . . ." '

On Friday, 24th April, another M.A.S. meeting took place, but it concerned a completely different topic, the resignation of pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Swan. Swan, a 'liberal', had been appointed pro-Vice-Chancellor in order to assist Dr. Matheson in his onerous responsibilities. His main function appeared to be to keep an eye on student dissent. During a Monash graduation ceremony, at which the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria was present, Swan called on that worthy to speak out against the Vietnam war, thus causing him considerable embarrassment. As this had happened at a time when the University authorities, and particularly Dr. Matheson, had been making loud noises about University neutrality, and about how the University as an institution could not be identified with any point of view on controversial questions, there was a certain amount of criticism of Professor Swan amongst his colleagues. Swan offered his resignation to the University Council. This immediately caused a great upset, especially among moderate and liberal students, who felt that at last they had found a spokesman within the ranks of senior administrators. Only the Labor Club was relatively unmoved, with *Print* pointing out that Swan's statement could be interpreted as pro-war just as much as anti-war and asserting that the whole thing would blow over with Swan apologizing profusely and Council refusing to accept his resignation. Large numbers of students turned up to the M.A.S. muting and listened somewhat dubiously to Labor Club speakers arguing that the whole thing was a put up job

so that the University Council could publicly re-affirm its commitment to 'University neutrality' and Swan could earn a completely unjustified reputation as a 'radical' and use it to confuse students in future. The Labor Club speakers need hardly have bothered . . . they were followed immediately by Professor Swan himself, who announced that his resignation had been completely voluntary and had come about because after making his statements at the graduation ceremony, he had suddenly realized what a terrible thing he had done and how utterly wrong it was for anyone in a responsible University position to say anything which could embarrass the Governor of Victoria! He then called for some member of M.A.S.' to move that the meeting immediately close. Nobody did. Instead the meeting went on to discuss the hypocrisy of Administration in general and Professor Swan in particular, attention being particularly focused on the statement that the resignation had been 'completely voluntary'. M.A.S. then voted not to support Swan, or take any action if his resignation was accepted, but to immediately (and against Swan's expressed wishes) inform Administration of M.A.S.'s hostility to any moves against free speech within the University, and to any attempt to force Swan or anybody else to resign for expressing political views, by going over to the Administration building '*en masse*' to express their concern.

About 150 students went to the Administration building, occupied the Council chamber, solemnly delivered a copy of the meeting's resolutions, and equally solemnly left. As predicted, Swan's resignation was not accepted by Council.

An interesting sidelight was that some of the students against whom injunctions had been taken out the previous year were sent little notes reminding them that the injunctions were still in force and warning them not to enter the Administration building again or to face the

consequences ('contempt of court' proceedings and gaol). One of the notes was sent back with a few pointed comments about paper tigers'.

## **ADMIN DROPS ITS BOMBSHELL**

On the Tuesday following the 'Swansong', M.A.S. voted to step up the pressure on Administration, for the reinstatement of 'the three'. The following resolution was passed:

'That this general meeting of students resolves that a deadline of one week be set for the reinstatement of "the three" expelled students. Further, this student general meeting acknowledges that if the three expelled students are not reinstated by the deadline the only alternative will be to occupy the University's Offices.'

At the time this resolution was passed, there was not a great deal of enthusiasm in the campaign, and there was some doubt as to whether it would be possible to act on the expiry of the deadline or whether there would have to be a further delay until more students had become more angry about the expulsions and Administration's refusal to discuss them with M.A.S. Dr. Matheson soon changed all that. On 30th April he released the following 'extract from a draft minute of the Professorial Board meeting held on 28th April, 1971 (*Sound* No. 29).

'The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the motion 6 of M.A.S. meeting held on 27th April which stated that the University Offices would be occupied by students one week from that date unless the three suspended students were by then reinstated. He also referred to the manner in which some Council members were prevented

from attending the Council Meeting on 19th April with the consequent interruption to University business.

The Vice-Chancellor mentioned a report he had received concerning the serious risk of injury to persons in the event of fire while the entrances to the University Offices were barricaded. It was also the Vice-Chancellor's view that the barricading, occupation, and constant threat of occupation of the Offices had had a marked effect on the attitudes of those working in the building: so much so that he doubted whether the university staff working in the building would tolerate these conditions much longer. It seemed to the Vice-Chancellor that if the building were occupied work in the University Offices might cease. He drew attention to the fact that though it is often said that the prime function of the University is to teach, this function could not be carried on for long unless the essential, though ancillary, services provided by the staff in the University Offices were able to continue. If the present state of affairs were to persist we might well be approaching the time when the police would have to be called in order to ensure that the business of the University could proceed.

There was lengthy discussion of the issues raised by the Vice-Chancellor, particularly with reference to the interference with the Council Meeting of 19th April and to the threatened occupation in the coming week. In the course of the discussion the Board noted the statement that an attempt would be made to disrupt future Council Meetings (M.A.S. meeting, 19th April, Motion 4).

Following this discussion the Board resolved as follows (nem. con.):

1. That the Professorial Board supports the Vice-Chancellor in any measure which he may consider necessary. following consultation where possible, to prevent unauthorized entry to any University building or to prevent the disruption of University business.
2. The Professorial Board, in expressing its great concern at the action of a small group in preventing a full meeting of Council on 19th April, 1971, supports the Vice-Chancellor in taking any steps which are necessary to enable Council to meet unmolested on the main University Campus when it pleases.

The Vice-Chancellor then asked for advice on specific questions connected with the next meeting of Council and, by a show of hands, the Board agreed (nem. con.):

1. That the Council Meeting of 10th May, 1971 should be held in the Council Room of the University.
2. That if it should prove necessary the Vice-Chancellor should call the police to ensure that Council is able to meet undisturbed on 10th May, 1971.\_(Our emphasis — Ed.)

This last passage was intended to be the 'throwing down of the gauntlet'. The three expelled students were not going to,, be reinstated (that had been decided the previous year). Council was going to meet when and where it pleased, and if M.A.S. tried to stop it, the police would be called. 10th May, 1971 was to be the day that M.A.S. bluff was called. Administration would reassert its authority, either peacefully by M.A.S. backing down, or forcibly by calling the police. Either way, M.A.S. would at last be defeated on 10th May, or



so thought Dr. Matheson when he announced his threat to call the police in the newspapers, with the famous last words 'I never bluff'.

But Dr. Matheson had been bluffing. Just ten days later all the expelled students were reinstated. In ten short days the University Council was forced to move from total immobility to complete capitulation. Moreover they were forced, by Dr. Matheson's bluster to do so in public.

## **HOW IT HAPPENED**

As soon as news of the police threat broke, the Labor Club revised its tactics. In view of the danger of M.A.S. moderates persuading students to back down in the face of the threat, it decided to cut the ground from under the moderates, being 'moderate' itself. The tactic was fully explained in a broadsheet, '*Cops on Campus . . . What is to be Done?*', distributed to all students on 4th May. This was the first time the Labor Club had really sought to involve the mass of students in planning the tactics of a campaign and was therefore a qualitatively new development. We reprint that broadsheet:

May 4th, 1971

*What is Louis Up To?*

At first sight Dr. Matheson's action looks INSANE. When you look at it more closely you see that it IS insane! In view of his previous (correct) statements that calling the police would be a disaster (for Admin), it seems certain that the move was dictated by people like Bolte and the Council members who are completely out of touch.

Their hope is that as soon as the threat is made an atmosphere of hysterical fear will be set up and M.A.S.

induced to withdraw its threats of direct action (while 'of course' carrying militant condemnatory motions). Although some student leaders may advocate this (we hope *nobody* would), it is unlikely to happen. If it did, M.A.S. would not only have confirmed Admin's right to maintain the expulsions and defy the referendum, it would have rendered itself *permanently* impotent. ANY time Louis and the boys wanted to expel someone or do whatever else they damn well please (remember the ban on N.L.F. Aid? . . off campus discipline and double jeopardy? . . . M.U.S.I.C.? etc.), they would *know in advance* that they would WIN. M.A.S. could shout, scream, threaten and throw tantrums but then Admin would threaten to call the police again and we would capitulate again. It's frightening to think what sort of a (literal) police state, Admin would then set up for Bolte at Monash.

### *What We Propose*

In fact students are far more likely to react with ANGER rather than fear. Louis probably knows this but he hopes that in that case we may do something stupid, like immediately occupying or smashing up the Admin building and so give him more of an *excuse* to call the cops than if we are merely blocking the totally unloved Council from meeting on campus. He would then hope to isolate Monash students from the general public and the left from Monash students, by a general hysteria campaign (violence etc.).

Our response to this is that Matheson has sadly blundered and can be made to fail in his effort to neutralize or isolate M.A.S. provided M.A.S. adopts firm but flexible tactics. In fact we believe that the situation can be turned around so that Matheson himself becomes

isolated from the general public as well as staff and students, and is forced not only to drop the threat of police action for the time being but to readmit the three.

This can be done if *ALL* our energies are totally committed to a campaign among students, staff, (to isolate Admin completely) and outside the University, that brings pressure to bear for NO - COPS ON CAMPUS and for Admin to RE-INSTATE THE THREE.

To make such a campaign *overwhelmingly* successful we should START by offering Admin a reasonable compromise over the expelled students, and at the same time *postpone* the occupation scheduled for today. This is necessary because Matheson is deliberately trying to force a confrontation by his inane statement 'I never bluff' (he *usually* bluffs — remember the Supreme Court Injunctions, the threats to prosecute for 'trespass'. the threat to expel everyone involved in direct action last year and so on). He hopes that moderates and liberals will believe that confrontation is inevitable and that therefore some students, most of the staff and all the Professorial Board will rally around HIM to save the university.

WE offer a compromise while *at the same time* making it ABSOLUTELY CLEAR that we will continue to block Council from meeting while they are trampling on our democratic rights AND that if cops are called we will FIGHT them then we will have turned the tables. Anyone who *sincerely* wants to avoid a clash and is not merely trying to intimidate M.A.S. will see that the best solution is for Matheson to *accept* our compromise offer and unconditionally withdraw all threats of police activity now or in the future. They will then devote their efforts to persuading Admin to take this way out and the Prof.

Board may well reverse its decision. If it doesn't, *everyone* will KNOW who is REALLY trying to cause trouble and all students, most staff and perhaps even some Professors will support M.A.S. in resisting police attacks.

### *THE COMPROMISE*

Apart from postponing the occupation, the compromise we propose is as follows: M.A.S. will urge the three expelled students to sign undertakings for Council provided Dr. Matheson agrees to recommend that Council re-admit them with suspended sentences. In this case M.A.S. will not block Monday's Council meeting. Furthermore, in the unlikely event that Admin is sincere in regarding last year's referendum as inconclusive, M.A.S. is willing to agree to the holding of *another* referendum on the simple question 'That the three students be now re-enrolled with suspended sentences', providing that Council unconditionally agrees in advance to abide by the result. It must be clearly understood that M.A.S. is not backing down from its original position of opposing any disciplinary action out of weakness but solely in order to allow Dr. Matheson to get himself off the hook on which he has deliberately hung himself. We will regard the under-takings as purely a formality and irrespective of accepting the suspended sentences will defend the three students from any further unjust disciplinary measures on the same basis as any other student and just as though they had never been disciplined before. If Dr. Matheson or the Professorial Board do not accept this compromise or if Council rejects the 'insincere' undertakings, we will revert to our original demand in taking direct action in second term and will oppose the three students giving

even formal undertakings as they like the rest of us would by then already be involved in breaking them.

It is clear that Dr. Matheson *can* accept this compromise *if he wants to*. It is consistent with his statement in *Sound* that he would recommend readmission if the three promised not to be violent in future. He could pretend that M.A.S. had not called his bluff with the police and that he was acting of his own free will. He would be lying but that would be nothing new! If Matheson is too pig-headed then the Professorial Board can accept it. If not then when Admin calls the cops they will be totally isolated and we will be able to fight back effectively.

The compromise does not call on the three to give *sincere* undertakings because Council has no right to them and it would be impossible to obtain them. The 3 are *not* cringing crawlers like Professor Swan. For this move to be successful it is essential to convince Dr. Matheson that he will be *totally isolated* if he does reject it and the police ARE called. The campaign we propose for this between now and Monday is as follows:

### *GENERAL LINES OF CAMPAIGN*

1. The M.A.S. offices and officers to be fully devoted to the campaign, the P.R.O. in particular to ensure that all students and staff are fully informed of today's decision.
2. Petitions and resolutions against the use of police and in support of M.A.S. policy to be taken round to all lectures and 'tutes', Clubs and Sports Associations.
3. All official University bodies to be asked to speak out against use of police. Student representatives to be

withdrawn from any that fail to do so except where authorised by P.A.C. or similar reasons.

4. All staff members to be approached personally and urged to call emergency faculty and department meetings against the use of police. Official M.A.S. delegations to be sent to all Prof. Board and Council members, Dr. Matheson, Bolte. the Police Commissioner and anyone else appropriate.
5. Meetings of students in each Faculty to be held on Thursday to organize holding of discussions on repression instead of normal classes on Friday.
6. Brief advertisement Hand off Monash prepared by Discipline Struggle Committee to be inserted in papers. Broadsheets in local area, schools. Unis., etc.
7. Solidarity requested from trade unions, teachers' organisations, other tertiary institutions. etc.

The M.A.S. meeting on 4th May went along with the proposals in '*What is to be Done*'. The occupation scheduled for that day was postponed and the proposal for a 'compromise' was adopted as M.A.S. policy. Immediately after the meeting students set to work on the various aspects of the campaign, mobilizing as many students as possible for such activities as lobbying staff members, organizing faculty meetings, lecture and tutorial meetings and so on. A very important new development was that for the first time, students attempted to explain their case directly to the general public. Teams were organized to hand out leaflets at schools, factories, railway stations and shopping centres. In this way, not only did students win a considerable amount of outside support, but they also learnt

that they were not nearly so isolated from the general public as the newspapers tried to make out.

In addition to leaflets, an advertisement was inserted in the *Herald* by M.A.S., as follows:

**HANDS OFF MONASH!**

**OPPOSE POLICE VIOLENCE, AT MONASH. MONDAY!**

Monash students have demanded the readmission of three students expelled last year. The students were involved in demonstrations against the University serving U.S. and Australian big business instead of the working people of Australia.

A referendum of the entire staff and student body voted overwhelmingly that the penalties should be reduced. The University Council voted to leave them unchanged.

The students have voted to block the University Council from meeting until the Vice-Chancellor agrees to recommend readmission of the three in accordance with democratic procedures.

The Vice-Chancellor has refused this and instead has threatened to call the police.

In an attempt at compromise the students have undertaken not to use force or violence if readmitted.

The Vice-Chancellor has refused this and Council meeting will be blocked Monday.

**IT NOW SEEMS INEVITABLE THAT A VIOLENT CLASH WILL TAKE PLACE IF POLICE ARE CALLED TO MONASH ON MONDAY.**

DON'T LET DR. MATHESON CLOSE THE UNIVERSITY  
YOUR TAXES PAY FOR.

SUPPORT THE STUDENTS' DEMANDS FOR DEMOCRATIC  
RIGHTS AND A UNIVERSITY THAT SERVES THE PEOPLE  
AND NOT BIG BUSINESS.

### *OPPOSE POLICE VIOLENCE*

Authorized by the Monash Association of Students  
Discipline Struggle Committee on behalf of the  
overwhelming majority of students who have just voted  
to oppose police intervention. We are publishing this to  
combat lies and distortions regularly published about us  
in the press.'

Apart from the flurry of activity which it promoted, the  
meeting on 4th May was quite interesting in itself. Dr.  
Matheson attended the meeting in person. As a broadsheet  
the next day put it, he 'invoked the Riot Act, the  
Parliamentary legality of Council and the threat of police  
intervention to discourage further student action supporting  
the reinstatement of the expelled students. He also made  
clear his intentions regarding student dissent and the  
pacification of the University.'

### **MANOEUVRINGS**

Following the 4th May meeting, representatives of the  
expelled students went to see Dr. Matheson to discuss the  
possibility of implementing the compromise proposed by  
M.A.S. Here is a report of the meeting from a broadsheet  
*Compromise or Confrontation* 5th May, 1971:

'Matheson provided the following "Draft Undertaking" as  
the minimum he *thought* Council *might* be willing to  
*consider*.



"If Council is willing to grant my request and to suspend the penalty, I freely and voluntarily undertake that I shall not thereafter at any time be directly or indirectly involved in the application of force or violence to any person or property of the University, or in the obstruction of any person in the performance of his lawful activities or duties within the University, or in the obstruction or impeding in any way whatsoever of any class, examination, meeting, official ceremony or other authorised activity of any kind within the University, nor shall I in any way incite or advocate the involvement of any other person in any such conduct within the University."

'The bit "I freely and voluntarily undertake" is a real stroke of genius when Matheson dictated the text as a precondition for Hyde not remaining expelled! By including the words "incite or advocate" Louis is effectively asking Mike (Hyde) to undertake not to speak at M.A.S. meetings or write for broadsheets etc. By using the word "thereafter" he is asking Mike to admit by implication that he has been using force or violence in the past . .

The most interesting result of (further questioning) was that not only did Matheson say he could not guarantee the outcome of the Council meeting (which is natural) but also that he would *not* "unequivocally" (his word) say whether or not he was *recommending* that the undertakings be accepted. With quite amazing frankness he said that he would not make up his own mind on the question until after Council had debated it, saying "Please understand that I'd be putting my head on the chopping block" in case Council voted against readmission after he had recommended in favour of it!

A rather confusing situation had arisen from the M.A.S. meeting because although the majority had voted in favour of the compromise proposed by the left (signing 'insincere' statements to give Matheson the opportunity to back down from his 'I never bluff' police threat), there were many who still had doubts. In fact it appeared that students didn't really like the idea of 'insincere' statements very much and preferred genuine undertakings which would merely limit the expelled students to acting only within M.A.S. This was exploited by right-wingers who had been harping on the theme that 'all Dr. Matheson is asking is a promise not to use *violence*, if the expelled students want to reserve the right to use *violence* then why should we support them? — a cogent argument enough, so long as both students and Administration shared a common understanding of the meaning of 'violence'. But there was the rub. According to Dr. Matheson it was 'violent' to 'obstruct or impede' any 'lawful activity'. The Careers and Appointments Office was a particularly terrible example of violence. According to the expelled students 'violence' meant actual physical injury and not merely 'obstructing' something. As revolutionaries they believed that the present system is based on violence (not in some 'abstract' sense but in the sense of bombs in Vietnam and policemen's batons here) and that it would therefore have to be overthrown with violence.

However for the moment, in the present context, this was not the problem. At no time had the left at Monash wanted to use real 'violence' within the University. Certainly they had always made it clear that they would defend themselves from any violent attacks, and in particular that any police attacks would be dealt with in kind. But all the sit-ins and other forms of 'direct action' at Monash, including the Careers and Appointments occupation for which the three were expelled, had never actually been 'violent' with any

violence being initiated (though not necessarily concluded) from the authorities rather than the revolutionaries.

An M.A.S. resolution of 6th May read as follows:

(a) That this student general meeting urges the three expelled students to issue a statement to Council declaring clearly and precisely that they will not act in a violent manner, recognizing that they have not done so in the past, and that they were expelled for reasons other than violence.

(b) Should Dr. Matheson give a personal undertaking to convey this statement to Council with a recommendation that the three students be re-instated, then Monday's Council meeting will not be blocked.

(c) Should Dr. Matheson not do this, then M.A.S. will support and carry out a peaceful blocking of the Council meeting. Should police be called to prevent this, M.A.S. urges all its members to resist them as peacefully as possible.

Thus the expelled students were willing to give undertakings not to be involved in 'violence', while not renouncing direct action such as the occupation of the Careers and Appointments Office, or any activity sponsored by M.A.S. at any time. Accordingly, they wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Monash University Council as follows:

'I request Council to re-consider the penalty of exclusion from the University imposed upon me last year by the Discipline Committee and confirmed by the Appeal Committee of Council.

At the request of M.A.S. I hereby pledge, both to the Administration and to the student body that if re-

admitted I shall not in the future be involved in the application of force or violence to any person or property of the University. In giving this undertaking I wish to point out that I have never been engaged in such conduct in the past and moreover that even the Discipline Committee has not made any such finding against me. I give no undertaking to abandon the view I hold that the University serves a rotten capitalist and imperialist system or to stop taking part in M.A.S. meetings or activities.'

The phrase 'both to the Administration and to the student body' was included to distinguish this letter from any other 'undertakings' which might be signed in accordance with the earlier public statement that the three would sign anything at all, in order to provide Dr. Matheson with a way out, but would not mean it. By making their pledge to the student body, the three indicated that it was one they would keep. The phrase 'I have never been engaged in such conduct in the past' indicates that activities such as the Careers and Appointments occupation for which the three were originally expelled, would not be considered as 'violence' and that there was no undertaking to refrain from them in the future. The reference to 'taking part in M.A.S. meetings and activities' specifically rebutted Dr. Matheson's demand that the three should refrain from 'inciting' and further indicated that they would be 'in' any direct action sponsored by M.A.S.

Although all this made the undertaking completely valueless as a means of suppressing student dissent at Monash, or giving Administration a moral victory over the left, it did provide Dr. Matheson with a way out if he wanted to take it.

In *Sound* No. 30, he had said 'if they are serious in wanting to persuade Council to readmit them they must at least give an undertaking not to engage in violent behaviour in future . . .' and 'The expelled students have been told quite clearly what they should do in order to get their case re-considered. They have made no move in this direction at all and the conclusion can therefore be drawn that it is confrontation that is the aim, not readmission.'

Now 'the three' had given him what he had asked for, a formal undertaking not to engage in violent behaviour. Dr. Matheson could have accepted this and/or required an 'insincere' undertaking to abide by University discipline in all its aspects. Instead he (quite accurately) pointed out that the undertakings were 'virtually a promise that they will continue to behave in the future as they have done in the past' (*Sound* No. 31). He also gave the following account of his conversation with a deputation of students. 'I repeated that I would convey any message from the excluded students to Council but again said that I would not recommend Council to readmit the three; I explained that I intended to review the situation as I saw it for Council, so that members could make up their own minds on the right course of action. In reply to a question whether I wanted the three to be re-admitted I answered "no"; did anyone seriously expect me to answer "yes"?' In the same issue of *Sound* (7th May), Dr. Matheson indicated that even if the three had signed the draft letter he had for them CI freely and voluntarily undertake . . .') then 'I should certainly transmit it, if they signed it, to Council but could not recommend that they be re-admitted. My reason for this was that the actions of the three this term do not persuade me at present that any written statement could be relied upon.'

Those moderate students who had continued to give Administration the benefit of the doubt by accepting its

assertion that the 1970 referendum was 'inconclusive', and holding that it would be reasonable that the expelled students should sign undertakings that they would not use violence, now found that they had no further defence of Administration to offer. Not only had there been no move to initiate a new referendum, but Matheson had made it clear that he was not inclined to accept any undertakings from the expelled whatsoever.

The moderates had no choice now but to follow the course provided in the M.A.S. resolution of 6th May—that is 'to carry out a peaceful blocking of the Council Meeting', and 'should police be called . . . to resist them as peacefully as possible'.

Now that virtually the entire student body was united against Admin even leading right wing students were forced into a position where they had to either go along with direct action or be discredited in the same way as Dr. Matheson was. A broadsheet entitled *Did You Notice* commented that amongst the flurry of broadsheets distributed on Thursday and Friday last week there was not one right wing or "moderate" one put out in opposition. The reasons for this can be found in *NOISE* No. 31 where Dr. Matheson admits everything the left has been saying about him.'

Attention on both sides now shifted from trying to win over sections of the student body to support or oppose the expulsions, to trying to win over the academic staff. These were now the sole potential base of support for Administration. Without that base, the authorities would be forced to rely exclusively on the police to maintain control of the University; with it the usual functions of the University could continue normally, at least. Administration now concentrated all its attention on trying to use the staff as a counter-weight to the students (who were now recognized as

a united bloc). On Friday, 7th May, a general meeting of the Staff Association was called. The main motion on the agenda was one fully backing Administration in the use of police against students. It was hoped that the passage of this would make students feel isolated and encourage them to withdraw. An M.A.S. leaflet to staff explained that it would not have this effect at all:

'M.A.S. can agree not to block the Council meeting on Monday and perhaps send a delegation to it. Unfortunately past experience with delegations has not been very happy (The "Joint Commission on University Affairs" recommended that Council meetings should be open and this recommendation was first accepted but now rejected) . . . it will not solve the more general problem of the re-admission of the three or of Council being unable to meet at its "own" University, or of whether police should be used to intervene in University affairs, or of the general state of relations between students and Administration. Whatever staff members might *like* M.A.S. is *not* going to allow Council to meet on campus while it continues to defy the results of the referendum last year. We think *you* should take the same view because even though students and staff took opposite sides in the voting, what is at stake now is whether democratic rights should prevail. Even if you are not willing to take a stand you will just have to accept that we *are* taking it. For M.A.S. to back down now, merely because of the police threat, would not only mean allowing Council to pursue its present undemocratic course, but would *also* mean that we had given up permanently our right to take direct action on *any* issue. Dr. Matheson would only have to threaten the police and M.A.S. would have to accept whatever new expulsions, Statutes or other policy he had decided on. The VC and perhaps many staff members would *like* to

see M.A.S. give up the policy of direct action but the plain fact is that like it or not, we are *not* going to do it. This is not as arrogant as saying "like it or not the expulsions stand"—it simply means that we will not agree in advance to accept in the future such measures as banning N.L.F. Aid, extending discipline to cover off-campus activities, excluding students with criminal records etc., that have been introduced in the past and would be with us today if not for the threat of direct action. Whether you agree with this view or not. M.A.S. has already compromised as far as it can—both by urging the students to give formal undertakings when they are *already entitled* by the referendum to re-admission *and* by not holding the occupation of the Administration building that was scheduled for last week (an occupation gives far more excuse for police action than merely blocking a meeting that can be held elsewhere), so M.A.S. has irrevocably committed itself to block-ing the Council on Monday.

. . . A motion *endorsing* the call for police intervention has been proposed from the clique of reactionary professors who usually dominate the Staff Association. No doubt it is thought that passage of such a motion will intimidate M.A.S. into backing down. It won't because we are already fully committed—what it *will* do is encourage Dr. Matheson to actually call the police on Monday instead of just threatening it and thus make a clash inevitable.'

At the meeting the staff voted to reject the anti-M.A.S. motion and instead resolved that:

'While recognizing that situations could arise where the Vice-Chancellor would be forced to call the police, this Association expresses apprehension about the likely



consequences of such an action for staff morale and staff-student relations, and hopes that every possible effort will be made to deal with the present situation by other means . . . and hopes that initiatives of this kind (inviting M.A.S. representatives to address Council) will make it possible to avoid confrontation with the M.A.S.'

## **THE CRUNCH COMES**

On the morning of Monday, 10th May, all the various forces within the University had lined up for battle. The students were solidly united and determined to resist the police. An M.A.S. referendum had resulted in an overwhelming (82%) vote that 'the presence of police on the Monash campus is both undesirable and unwarranted'. The staff were generally neutral but inclined against the Administration. A number of member of the Staff Socialists Group had announced their active support for the M.A.S. stand. They played a more important role than their numbers because they added to the 'authority' of M.A.S. and detracted from the 'authority' of Administration. It was revealed in a broadsheet that even Administration was split:

'It has been reported that the original threat in *Empty Vessels Make the Most* . . . was actually a distortion of the Professorial Board's position and that even the reactionary Professors only resolved that police should be called if Council members are being assaulted (which they weren't last time although several tried to assault students). The Board's minutes contain *no* reference to the motion quoted in *Sound* but *do* contain a statement that Police should not be called merely to disperse a crowd but only in a more serious situation (Burning the building? Lynching a Councillor?) As La Pirow's *Free Speech* said, Matheson's statement *should* have been "I never bluff SUCCESSFULLY".

Nevertheless, at this 'eleventh hour', Dr. Matheson's stand was more adamant than ever. He announced in *Sound* No. 32, that:

'I have certainly declined to advise Council to readmit the three students still excluded since they have been round the University all this term inciting other students to violence in their support. It is for them to persuade Council that they can be trusted to keep the peace in future.'

This statement was also released to the daily press together with other comments about the 'inaccurate, misleading and provocative' advertisement placed by M.A.S.

Something like 4000 students attended the M.A.S. meeting at lunchtime and there was an air of considerable drama. Nevertheless there was no real debate and the motion (adopted overwhelmingly) simply appointed a delegation to inform the Vice-Chancellor:

'that if he agrees to hold another referendum this week on the proposition "that the three students still expelled should now have their sentences suspended on the same conditions as those students whose sentences were suspended last year" and to recommend to the University Council that the result be implemented, then:

(i) M.A.S. will accept the result if it turns out to be unfavourable: and

(ii) M.A.S. will not block today's University Council meeting.'

The corollary, that if this was not accepted, M.A.S. *would* block the Council meeting, was so universally accepted that it was simply taken for granted.

Right-wing and D.L.P. motions were not even considered by the meeting and the moderates were completely silent.

For the first time M.A.S. resolved on taking action virtually without any opposition in the face of threat to use the police, as well as the (now usual) 'discipline' and 'injunctions'! Instead of the usual few hundred going to the Administration building to implement the decision, on behalf of the less active majority, this time the whole meeting acted so that were *several thousand* students gathered on the steps to blockade Council if Dr. Matheson did not meet their demands.

It seemed as though students had taken to heart the advice contained in a right-wing broadsheet distributed earlier under the heading *Threat of Violence, M.A.S. meeting today:*

'If you vote for an occupation as a means of asserting student power, then inevitably this will result in greater polarization between students and the Administration. It will also almost inevitably result in violence. If you vote for an occupation, are you prepared to take part, and to make it work for *your* good? If you vote for an occupation but don't occupy, are you prepared to have the Labor Club occupy "on your behalf" for *their* ends? That is, if you are not prepared to occupy yourself, are you satisfied that the 200-300 who will occupy, will adequately represent *your* demands? THE REPUTATION OF ALL STUDENTS IS AT STAKE DON'T LET IT BE LOST!'

Anticipating the M.A.S. decision, members of the Council had sneaked into the building an hour or so early in order to escape student wrath, and the Council meeting started while students were gathered outside. The question then arose as to whether students should occupy the building and or force their way into the meeting room in order to

prevent the meeting continuing until the Vice-Chancellor had agreed to hold the referendum, or whether Council should be given the chance to agree to the referendum at the meeting. Although the M.A.S. decision implied that Council should be prevented from meeting at all unless Dr. Matheson *first* agreed to support the student demands, the Labor Club proposed to the crowd gathered outside that since they had already managed to get in they should be allowed to consider the M.A.S. demands and prevented from leaving until they had done so and that if they did not reach a satisfactory decision that evening they should be chased out of the building and off the campus and never allowed to return. This was communicated to the Administration.

A large part of the crowd drifted off to lectures during the afternoon. After having settled in on the steps, guards were posted on all exits to the Administration building to make sure that no Council members slipped through and sentries were sent out to local police stations to find out if any concentrations of police were being assembled in readiness for an assault on Monash. A report soon came back from Oakleigh that there were two busloads of police back from Oakleigh that there were four busloads of police there together with horses, paddy wagons and a mobile canteen(!) This caused intensive preparations to be made, from the posting of further sentries and the establishment of courier and telephone communications to keep a watch on police movements, to the stockpiling of ammunition dumps (rocks) and the formation of squads of students to initiate combat. The official policy of M.A.S. was to resist the police 'as peacefully as is possible' and this meant that the bulk of students taking part would confine themselves to sitting down, linking arms, passively resisting arrest and so on (at least initially). The referendum on M.A.S. attitudes to police had specifically *rejected* a motion 'That M.A.S. supports and endorses the use of sufficient physical force to prevent the

entry onto campus of police, and their continued presence, when called by the Administration for the purpose of intervening in an internal University dispute'. The vote was 865 in favour and 1325 against. This meant that M.A.S. policy was to resist police 'as peacefully as is possible' but not to try to forcibly prevent them merely entering the campus or to try to forcibly drive them away. Presumably students would have discovered just how 'peacefully' the police respond to being 'resisted' and would have then redefined what was 'possible'. The Labor Club however, having had experience of police violence at demonstrations, had taken a different attitude right from the start. Before the referendum was held it announced that irrespective of whether M.A.S. as a whole voted to resist the police, the Labor Club *would* be resisting them and it was up to the others whether they joined in or not. It justified this stand on the basis that if the majority voted to fight, the minority would not feel obliged to join in that fight and many of the majority would leave it to the Labor Club to do the fighting for them, so that if the majority voted not to fight, it could not expect the minority to follow them in refraining from fighting either. When the referendum results were announced and Administration spokesmen began making comments about how students were 'bound' not to resist the police, the Labor Club simply retorted that the question would not arise if Administration was 'bound' by the 82% vote against calling police, and that if it did arise then there would be 1325 students 'bound' not to fight them and 865 taking part in the fight! The question bluntly posed was whether Dr. Matheson was in a position to use police to fight nearly 900 students with others 'resisting peacefully' and possibly joining in. The answer, as events turned out, was that he wasn't.

The Council meeting lasted some 64 hours, from 1p.m. and, as the afternoon wore on into evening, life for the students

became cold and boring. On previous occasions, direct action had taken the form of an occupation, and there had been an enormous amount of work to do running off broadsheets and so on. This time no work could be done and students had to content themselves with singing, guerilla theatre, and forums held on the Administration building steps. Towards evening a bonfire was lit to keep warm and there was occasional loud singing and chanting of a particularly bloodthirsty character which was intended to be heard by the Council 'deliberating' inside. A genuine pig's head, marked 'Bolte' was obtained from the abattoirs and paraded around spiked on the end of a pole. Eventually, the idea gained currency, that Council was deliberately stalling in the hope that the hundreds of students outside would give up and go away (actually they weren't — they just couldn't make up their minds what the hell to do next!). The M.A.S. delegation had gone in fairly early in the piece and had left immediately after informing the Council of the meeting's resolution and answering a few silly questions (Q. If the expelled students signed an undertaking to abide by University discipline, could we rely on it? A. If they were placed in the same position as before, they would probably act in the same way as before.) Since then nothing had been heard from the Council, so every so often a 'deadline' was set and the Administration told that Council had better give its answer soon. However, when over-enthusiastic elements wanted to break into the Council meeting they were dissuaded. The counter argument was that if Council refused to give in 'openly and freely', then support for the left was more likely to be given if they showed restraint. If, however, the meeting was interrupted before the decision was announced, there would be the usual hypocritical assertions that 'Council was just, about to agree to compromise when the Labor Club interrupted the meeting, and spoilt everything'.

It was not until much later in the evening that the Council meeting, after many hours of vacillation, finally reached a decision and wound up. The first inkling students had that the decision might be a favourable one was when sentries reported that the police at Oakleigh station had been sent away. Some confusion occurred when the Council didn't announce its decision immediately, so that some Council members were blocked from leaving; others assured 'wait till you hear the resolution, you won't be unhappy. Although sceptical, students were persuaded by the dispersal of the police, and in spite of their earlier resolutions to occupy, to give them the benefit of the doubt. Finally the resolution suspending all three expulsions 'forthwith' upon the three signing (quite meaningless) statements, was read out and resulted in tumultuous cheering.

Expelled students were carried back to the Union where a general celebration ensued.

## **AFTERMATH**

The myth that 'We cannot negotiate under duress', a myth which all authorities from the arbitration court to the smallest boss, strive desperately to maintain, was finally shattered at Monash when the day came for the confrontation. TK readmission of the three expelled students while hundreds of students were outside the building threatening to prevent the Council functioning. proved to Monash students that direct action, or the threat of it, was the way to obtain justice. Events in the previous year, when petitions, appeals. referenda and all the rest had failed, had already proved that nothing else would suffice, but until direct action had actually succeeded, many students doubted that anything could. They wondered (as they were intended to), whether perhaps the authorities were simply

too strong to be moved and whether continuing rebellion was just futile.

By standing up to the threat of police action Monash students proved to themselves that the way to meet threats of violence was to prepare seriously for counter-violence. This too was an important lesson because if the 'moderates' advice had been accepted, and M.A.S. had withdrawn under the threat of police, the three students would still have been expelled, and the threat of police could have been used successfully every time there was a dispute between students and the Administration.

The capitulation was front page headlines the next day, together with a statement from the acting state secretary of the D.L.P. who said it was quite clear the Monash Council was not in control of the University:

'I think the decision of the Monash Council will be rejected by most Victorians as deeply shocking, a cowardly surrender to the threat of violence, and useful only in deferring for a few weeks the formal control of the Monash University by the group who have on this occasion forced council to capitulate to them.

The surrender by the whole of the Council seems to go far beyond the surrender of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Matheson. It seems that it's unable to exercise the statutory duties and the responsibilities that are entrusted to them. The extent of the Council's surrender must have staggered even the Monash Labor Club. It seems incredible. the whole thing.'

The 'group' referred to was of course virtually the entire student body of Monash, however the D.L.P. was wrong in predicting that in a few weeks they would have 'formal



control of the University'. Despite the capitulation, Monash University is to this day still run by the very same Council and Administration. What is more, there have been no major 'confrontations' with *their* authority since they gave in on that day. What *has* changed is that ever since May 1971, the University authorities have been unable to overtly interfere with legitimate political activities on campus though they are still trying with such actions as restrictions on M.A.S. funds etc.

The 'undertaking' which the three students had to sign so that Council's resolution readmitting them could come into effect, was as follows:

'I shall not be directly or indirectly involved in the application of force or violence to any person or property of Monash University or in the obstruction of any person in the performance of his lawful activities or duties within the University or the obstruction or impeding in any way whatsoever of any class, examination, meeting, official ceremony or other like activities of any kind within the University.'

This was virtually identical with the draft which Dr. Matheson had earlier said he would transmit to Council if they signed it. There were three changes from the original. 1. The word 'thereafter' was not used so that there was no implied admission that the students signing it *had* been using 'force or violence' before their expulsion (although they had certainly done some of the other things prohibited). 2. The reference to 'inciting' and 'advocating' was completely removed. 3. The words 'I freely and voluntarily undertake' had been completely removed.

The most important thing however, was that everyone knew that any statement the three signed would be in terms of

the M.A.S. resolution of 4th May:

'We (M.A.S.) will regard the undertaking as purely a formality and irrespective of accepting the suspended sentences will defend the three students from any further unjust disciplinary measures on the same basis as any other student and just as though they had never been disciplined before. If Dr. Matheson or the Professorial Board do not accept this compromise or if Council rejects the "insincere" undertakings, we will revert to our original demand in taking direct action in second term and will oppose the three students giving even formal undertakings as they, like the rest of us, would by then already be involved in breaking them.'

The only 'sincere' statement the three had signed was the one which Dr. Matheson had described correctly as 'virtually a promise that they will continue to behave in the future as they have done in the past'.

Had Admin acknowledged its 'mistake' in upholding the expulsions in the previous year in the face of the negative referendum, they could have won back a considerable amount of credibility instead of being exposed as 'paper tigers'.

But this they could not do without lending legitimacy to the idea that University policy on major issues of controversy could be decided by referendum and hence allowing the students and staff to undermine their control. Matheson refused to concede that Administration had been defeated by direct action, or to support in any way the notion that the University as a whole had a right to decide who should or should not be expelled.

In a typical statement to the press Dr. Matheson said that 'a delegation of five students from the Monash Association of Students had agreed to the terms of reinstatement' and that M.A.S. had agreed not to use direct action in future. He also said the Council decision was 'an act of clemency'. In a letter to the *Age* (Wednesday, 12th May) he said:

'Until Monday morning the student position was that Council would be prevented from meeting on campus, by force if necessary, unless I gave an undertaking that I would recommend the readmission of the three expelled students. This I refused to do, but I did set out some conditions which I thought Council might accept as a basis for considering readmission, and I undertook to ask Council to hear a delegation from M.A.S. I also said with the full authority of the professorial board and somewhat lukewarm support from the Staff Association, that I might have to call the police in certain contingencies.

Arrangements were made both for the Council to meet on Monday and for help to be summoned if necessary. In the event there was no attempt to impede the Council and the police were not needed.

At lunch time on Monday a large meeting of students voted to ask Council to hold a referendum on the proposition that the students be readmitted on the same terms as were applied to certain students last year: namely. that the exclusions be suspended on pain of good behaviour and that they be reimposed if the conditions were not obeyed.

Since this was virtually identical with the conditions which I myself had suggested, but which had previously been rejected by two of the three expelled students, it was, I thought, a considerable concession by the general

body of students.' (In fact, apart from suggesting a further referendum, which Council in any case decided was "unnecessary", the M.A.S. position *did not change at all* on the Monday. Dr. Matheson's previous opinion of this considerable concession by the general body of students was "I have certainly declined to advise Council to readmit the three students still excluded since they have been round the University all this term inciting other students to violence in their support. It is for them to persuade Council that they can be trusted to keep the peace in future"—Ed.)

'Council imposed the further condition *as agreed by the M.A.S. delegation* that if there were any breach of the undertaking by the three students they would at once be excluded again.

The position therefore is that whereas the dispute was formerly with the expelled students, a settlement has now been effected with M.A.S. if there is any breach of the condition leading to a reimposition of the penalty of exclusion the *M.A.S. is obligated to support the reimposition.*' (Our emphasis)

It was statements like these which prompted members of the delegation to write letters to the press (published only in the Australian Union of Students paper *National U*) commenting that there had been no question of an 'agreement' between the delegation and the Council, since the delegation had merely gone there to state M.A.S. policy and explain why the Council was under siege, and pointing out that M.A.S. policy is decided at student general meetings and only at student general meetings and that it would be rather unlikely to give up the use of direct action when it had proved so highly successful on this occasion. Far from being 'obligated to support the reimposition', M.A.S. had already approved a

statement that 'irrespective of accepting the suspended sentences (M.A.S.) will defend the three students from any further unjust disciplinary measures on the same basis as any other student and just as though they had never been disciplined before'.

The Administration continued to try to save face, not only by its various public statements, but also by staging a ritual 'signing of undertakings' for 'the three', in the presence of large numbers of solemn looking professors and Deans, all mumbling about 'sincerity'. (Since then, in explaining why the Supreme Court injunctions against some students were still in force, Dr. Matheson has said that he knew the three regarded the undertakings as 'just a piece of paper' and that he wanted the injunctions in order to have something over them.)

With renewed enthusiasm, radical students turned their attention to the coming Moratorium and Anti-Apartheid campaigns.

# 1971

The rest of 1971 was qualitatively different to any other period at Monash. Conservatives or moderates often spoke in superficial terms of the 'defusing' or 'quietening' of Monash. Certainly there was a degree of frustration among radicals at the lack of mass action in third term, and a general confusion as to 'the way forward' for the revolutionary movement, but this in no way added up to a deradicalization of the mass of Monash students.

1971 was the first year in which the Administration did not launch an offensive against the left wing movement. In 1967 there was N.L.F. aid and the subsequent disciplining of the students and the development of an on-campus movement; in 1968 there was 'discipline for off-campus activities', another clear attack on the radical movement . . . this time on its activities off campus as well; in 1969 '17.3' reared its ugly head and again students were forced to fight on campus in defence of their movement (the disciplining of students in this year made it doubly necessary to concentrate all forces on the administration); 1970 brought with it the exclusion of Albert Langer and later the expulsion of six students as yet again the administration chose the battleground and students had no choice but to fight back.

In 1971 students achieved a clear victory over Admin. In other years victories had also been won but the capitulation of the Administration over the question of the expelled students was qualitatively different from any other Administration defeat. In expelling the students, the Administration, and in particular Dr. Matheson had initiated a 'do or die' battle. One side had to back down, one side had to admit defeat. In a very real sense the whole anti-

expulsions campaign was a power struggle between the Administration and the students. The students won, quite decisively, and the Administration retired to lick its wounds for the rest of the year.

After May in 1971 the left wing movement at Monash was able to function without any interference from the authorities. Students who had participated in the illegal blockade of Council were not even threatened with discipline, there was no action from Admin when Monash was openly being used as a base to stop the Springbok matches, when Union facilities were taken over for the Moratorium and anti-apartheid, when smoke bombs and 'demonstration kits' were made up and distributed from tables in the Union, when students set up a Monash People's Defence Corps and had one training session, when \$1000 of M.A.S. money was spent on fighting the government, or when President Nixon's 'personal adviser on youth' was driven from the campus. In 1968, 1969 and 1970, the authorities felt strong enough to introduce measures designed to combat this sort of activity; yet in 1971 they readmitted all expelled students and then retired from the scene.

These events do not mean that students at Monash have won any sort of final victory against the reactionary authorities, nor does it mean that these authorities have mysteriously 'changed their nature' and ceased to be repressive.

However the temporary abating of Admin repression in 1971 caused radical activity to become slightly fragmented since there were now no major issues around which the movement automatically unified itself. There was a deliberate shift of emphasis to off-campus activities by the Labor Club, whose members largely involved themselves in local groups of the

Worker-Student-Alliance, for there was a growing awareness and acknowledgement among them of the leadership of the working-class in the struggle against U.S. imperialism.

The general student body became deeply involved in the Moratorium and the Anti-Apartheid Campaign, both essentially off-campus activities. For the first time since 1966 students were not under attack by the Administration and could move off-campus to the real issue — that of changing society — though there was some confusion as to where to start. The fact that this move occurred gave the lie to claims that students are only interested in 'wrecking the university'.

At the beginning of the year, the Monash left expressed its desire for greater unity by setting up 'United Front' to organize a Counter Orientation Week at the beginning of first term. It aimed at orientating students to consider the real social issues instead of merely pursuing a meal-ticket degree. A huge tent was set up in the Forum, and first-year students saw films and heard speakers and discussions upon Vietnam, Imperialism, Racism, Poverty, Palestine, China, the Unions, and Teachers Strikes, as well as folk singing and street theatre.

The Labor Club began to emphasize more long-term planning, and initiated the Monash People's Militia and the Campaign against the Class Bias in Education, both long-range, continuing struggles, the latter capable of uniting workers and students. The fact that the concept of a 'Monash People's Militia' could even be raised shows the depth of radicalization on campus. Members were also engaged in the 'July Assault on Imperialism' including the Moratorium. They particularly noted the rising tide of fascism and oppression shown by the frame-up of Albert Langer following the Mayday demonstration. However, there



was a general decentralization of activity on campus. Whilst this encouraged new approaches, it also led to a lack of direction in the left. David Dunstan and Rob King, not of the orthodox Labor Club line, brought out a 'totally integrated' left-wing *Lot's Wife*, and later initiated a counter-cultural group, the 'Electrical and Chemical Caucus.' It is interesting to note that counter-cultural movements have never been very strong at Monash, probably because of the dominance of political struggle and in particular the 'hard line' left view that people should fight to change society rather than 'drop out'. The Maoists have always held that the drug culture is an expression of bourgeois individualism, and is encouraged by the ruling-class as a 'harmless fake rebellion' which is opposed to real political struggle. A Women's Liberation group formed, but encountered considerable difficulties in operation and concentrated mainly on a publicity and information function. The main activity for the students was undoubtedly the Halt All Racial Tours (H.A.R.T.) campaign, which was not initiated by the Labor Club.

# VOETSAK SPRINGBOKS!

The campaign to disrupt the Springbok Tours of 1971 had two important and unique characteristics in the history of radical activism at Monash. Firstly, it was the first mass movement on racism and, secondly, its orientation was totally external. The uniqueness was manifested in the composition of its activists, methods of work, propaganda and mass appeal. This was a major contributing factor towards the enormous enthusiasm generated at Monash in the last few days before the Olympic Park match and the surprisingly large number of demonstrators from Monash (in the range of 1500).

The Victorian campaign began in late 1970 with the formation of H.A.R.T. in October, nine months before the tour. It grew rapidly in those months and culminated in victory and such a political upheaval that a federal election on the many issues raised was a very real possibility.

From the beginning there was a determination to succeed even though the prospects of developing a massive and militant movement half way through the next year seemed rather forbidding. At the initial meetings, sometimes attended by only half a dozen largely inexperienced activists, there was often a feeling of not knowing what to do. There was one intention — to stop the tours. Confidence was gained by the knowledge that support could be gained. Monash H.A.R.T. was set up partly as a reaction to the strong liberal A.L.P.-type influence in the Victorian movement which at the beginning was opposed to the physical disruption of matches. In time the liberals recognized or accepted the need for physical disruption although later their pressure was to reappear.

After numerous meetings in early 1971 a general meeting of Victorian H.A.R.T. was called. Apart from the discussion on methods of work, allocation of the work load and general organization, a serious argument ensued which was to prove the last ideological conflict in the movement. The question was whether to level propaganda attacks primarily at the racist aspects of sport alone or on Apartheid as a whole, with racist sport being seen as that particular manifestation of Apartheid most vulnerable at that stage. A sharp division occurred between radicals and liberals. Liberals maintained that more people would become immediately involved on the single, simple issue while the radicals argued that the system of Apartheid, not the narrow issue of racism in sport, was the principal factor and that propaganda must be presented along those lines. The radicals saw the disruption of the tours as a means to attack Apartheid and not as an end in itself as implied by the liberals. Liberalism sought to confine and restrict the movement to the institutions of overt and immediately relevant racism, attacking the results of racism but hesitating attacking the cause. The radical viewpoint eventually prevailed, particularly after concise and constructive argument from members of the Waterside Workers' Federation.

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Although there had been a campaign at Monash to raise money for African freedom fighters in 1969, it was obviously necessary to inform students about all facets of the Apartheid issue as well as organizing action against the tour. So H.A.R.T.'s broadsheet '*Blood Sport*' was started 'in first term with this in mind. 196 The campaign was developing steadily. The South African women's tennis team played matches in Melbourne in late December, 1970. They were met by hostile demonstrations. After a protester burst onto the field and thoroughly disrupted the match by crashing

through the net, they were forced to play on remote courts under false names. The racist republic's flag was wrenched down.

The visit of the all-white South African surf life-saving team in late January gave a great fillip to student involvement at Monash. The team arrived to a noisy protest at Essendon Airport, and a small group travelled 200 miles to brave jeering crowds when they competed at Lorne. Despite the fact that the South Africans rammed their surf boat (donated by BP) through the demonstrators' ranks — knocking over several of them — the only arrests were of three students. These protests brought home the importance of wrecking the proposed Springbok rugby tour.

Bishop Crowther (the deported Bishop of Kimberley and Kuruman in South Africa) spoke to an avidly interested meeting at the University in April.

In the week before the Springbok team left South Africa, maybe partly due to press coverage and the threatened., union black ban (not to mention insanely pro-South African mumblings from Mr. McMahon and the Australian Rugby Union) enthusiasm and even excitement began to mount. H.A.R.T. meetings brought out dozens of people who were prepared to go to any lengths to stop the Springbok match.

With the team's arrival in Perth and its relatively friendly welcome there, things assumed greater reality — what would happen on 3rd July? What happened in Perth would not be allowed to happen here.

During the last week the Monash Association of Students set up a joint Moratorium/Anti-Apartheid 'centre' in a part of the Union building. Open twenty-four hours a day, it contained two Gestetners, typewriters and plenty of tables and floor

space for the poster-makers and writers to work in. Relays went out with posters and propaganda to all parts of the campus and outside as well.

With the arrival of the Springboks in Melbourne the place began to assume the air of *Division 4*. Constant touch was kept with the A.U.S. headquarters, which acted as a twenty-four hour co-ordination centre. The first mission despatched two carloads of students to 'cover' Mangalore Airport in case the Springboks in their five light planes tried to touch down there and sneak into the city. From then on 'hot tips' on the team's whereabouts came in thick and fast, especially from keen scouts seeing something unusual here or there. The unfortunate Afrikaaners were tracked down to one or two receptions, and the hush-hush accommodation of some of them was uncovered (at least one was staying with a Monash rugby player). A motel was stoned, and those who could be discovered were kept awake at night.

On the last day before the match there was frantic activity in the 'centre', mainly by inventive students testing out various devices of disruption which they were sure would stop the match. Besides the bizarre brain children of eccentric innovators, these included smoke bombs, marine flares and stink capsules. The 'demonstrators' kits soon sold out. Buses were organized and everything prepared for the important afternoon.

# 4th JULY, 1971 AND THE MONASH PEOPLE'S MILITIA

## *On Demonstrations*

'Idiotic Vandals' (Ex Attorney-General Hughes)

'Nuts' (Gorton)

'Pack-raping bikies' (Snedden)

'Rabble' (Bolte) 'Bastards' (Askin)

'Bums' (Nixon)

## *\_On Law and Order \_*

'The streets of our country are in turmoil, the universities are filled with students rioting and rebelling; communists are seeking to destroy our country . . . we need law and order . . . yes . . . without law and order the republic will fall. Elect us and we shall restore law and order.' Adolf Hitler, Hamburg, 1932.

The 4th July demonstration was held the day after the anti-apartheid demonstration and thus the struggle against racism and apartheid was still on everyone's mind. As usual the march had advertised its destination as the U.S. Consulate so the cops had formed a barricade of about 500 men to protect the consulate. The significance of the fact that the South African Trade Commission was half a mile past the consulate and unguarded had not entered their heads. As the march approached the consulate the police gripped their batons, manned their barricades and prepared

for a thoroughly enjoyable massacre (the march was small, about 1000). Then a strange thing happened: instead of trying to get through the cop lines and having a direct confrontation with the police, the leadership of the march organized everyone to keep right on marching past the consulate. 'Well that's it,' thought the cops, 'the cowards are too scared to take us on, their whole demo's a flop.' The police line broke up, batons were put away and only a few foot police and a car or two followed the march. About five minutes later, a roar went up and voices started yelling "... there's the South African Trade Commission.' The whole demonstration stormed across the road and smashed a number of windows in the place. Then the leadership called for a quick dispersal to avoid cop retaliation. Unfortunately dispersal was not quick enough and there were a few arrests and injuries, but far fewer than if the crowd had tried to reach the consulate.

Coming straight after the Olympic Park demonstration, it proved an excellent example of how people can organize and fight.

After the anti-apartheid demonstrations there was a great deal of discussion on campus about 'police brutality'. Most students were shocked and angered by the police violence at Olympic Park but there were few ideas about what could be done to prevent demonstrators from being attacked, or to stop the growing tide of State repression aimed at crushing militant demonstrations. The general attitude among students during the first few days after the Melbourne Springbok demonstration was one of shocked disbelief. (This was the first time that really large numbers of Monash students had personally experienced a police attack.) Broadsheets, speeches, posters, 'lamented'. 'deplored'. 'exposed' what had happened rather than analyzed just why it had happened and what could be done about it. The whole

furore had begun to die down without any conclusion being reached when the Labor Club put forward its concrete plan of action, the *'Monash People's Militia'*.

A leaflet called *'Organize and Fight'* was distributed to explain the proposal:

'The daily newspapers have excused the police attacks as "over reaction" due to provocation from a "violent minority" (i.e. "do not be militant and you won't get your heads smashed in"). Unfortunately this reactionary propaganda has had some effect. This can be seen from the fact that people at a recent M.A.S. meeting opposed the idea of conscious training in self-defence, street fighting tactics etc., on the grounds that "it would just make the police more violent". In reality this attitude is little different from that of the mass media which deplored the police attack but hoped that demonstrators had learned the lesson that demonstrations must be as quiet, passive and unnoticed as possible. The logical extension of the argument that we mustn't organize and fight is that we mustn't demonstrate. Bolte's thugs are quite clearly trying to get the public quite used to the idea that protests should be smashed and it won't be long before the cops are ready to hoe into any demo. There are three alternatives. 1. Don't demonstrate or do so innocuously so that no-one notices. 2. Continue as we are now . . . i.e. disorganized, inexperienced, untrained and get hundreds more arrests, injuries and defeats. 3. Consciously train in the "art" of demonstrating from tactics (vital) to efficient self-defence and offence and begin to lay the basis for a People's Army to be used in the inevitable struggle against fascism in Australia.

'If you view the police attacks in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, the State of Emergency in Brisbane, the police



invasion of La Trobe University . . . the police attack on Mayday, the physical smashing up of La Trobe anti-imperialist marches last year, the gaoling of large numbers of demonstrators, the frame-up of Albert Langer and consequent exposure of cop spying and intelligence tactics at demonstrations, the fact that Cass Young of the Nazi Party was openly assisting police to arrest and bash demonstrators at Olympic Park, etc., etc. ad nauseum, as all cases of "over reaction" or minor malfunctions of the system, then you won't be worried. If, however you can see a pattern in all this, a pattern amounting to a concerted attempt to cower people into being too afraid to demonstrate, you'll probably be wondering what we can do about it. Our answer is to FIGHT, and to FIGHT NOW.'

A Public Affairs Committee Forum (attended by about 250 students) endorsed the general line of this leaflet by recommending to P.A.C. that it immediately set up a 'Monash People's Defence Corps' to enable students to train in self-defence measures, and that it call an M.A.S. meeting to consider a proposal to set up a 'para-military, semi-clandestine, Monash People's Militia' to train in street fighting, tactics and military theory, to protect the campus from police invasion and to unite with off-campus struggles against the State.

Not unexpectedly these proposals caused an immediate reaction. A raging debate was soon underway and of course the newspapers took it up under such headings as 'Call to Arms at Monash'. The dividing line between the people wanting to 'organize and fight' and those opposing these ideas as 'unreal', 'fantasies', 'adventurist' was the question of the extent of fascism in Australia.

Those who still believed that while much was wrong with Australian society we could still fight for change and achieve it within the present social system, and that the rulers would not resort to fascist measures if their powers were successfully challenged, opposed the proposals for both the 'defence corps' and the 'militia' as just the lunatic ravings of a few 'crazies'. Others like the Student Christian Movement/Newman Society broadsheet said it would 'provoke the authorities':

The concept of a Monash People's Militia sounds as if it is realistic when considered in the wake of the brutal police action at Olympic Park. However, there are two basic reasons why I would urge you to vote against this motion:

1. The name and concept of a "People's Army" or "People's Militia" is basically a romanticization of the real political situation. Fascist is rapidly becoming more and more appropriate to describe certain aspects of government policy; however to form (or support the formation of) a Monash Militia is to encourage the growth of fascism. It is useless to seek direct power confrontations if you have no chance of winning, and any action which can feed the law-and-order line is to be avoided.
2. The setting up of a "People's Militia" in Australia is a trivialization of the whole concept of a People's Army . . . to set up a People's Militia here would be to infer that our situation here is the same as that in the Southern African States, as in Bangladesh, or in Vietnam, as in Brazil. Not only would it destroy the developing sense of internationalization in Australia, it would be an insult to those involved in real struggles for liberation.'— *Would You Believe*.

Those who saw an irreconcilable contradiction between the rulers and the majority of the Australian population, which

would come to a head with the ordinary people standing up and challenging the power of the rulers and the rulers replying with the full force of the State machine to keep the people down (just as in Indo-China, South Africa, Rhodesia, Ireland), supported the proposals and wanted to 'get prepared' for the fight ahead.

The first training session of The Monash People's Defence Corps took place on a Wednesday afternoon. Feeling slightly self-conscious the participants made their way to a deserted oval near the sports centre where they were given instruction (from other students) on how to defend themselves from a police baton attack. The session was relatively short. It was envisaged that future training would involve not only physical defence, but summing up of recent experiences at demonstrations and discussion of tactics such as how to outwit the police by making use of their weaknesses.

At a meeting of interested people the 4th July demonstration was discussed. This demonstration was of particular importance because its success was a concrete example of how a well-organized tightly-knit demonstration can achieve its objective with a minimum of arrests and injury to demonstrators.

On Thursday, 29th July, a M.A.S. meeting was held on the question of 'Violence and the Monash People's Militia'. This meeting voted to put the whole thing to a referendum which the Labor Club opposed on the grounds that it enabled people to vote without taking the trouble to hear the debate.

As expected, both the proposals for classes in 'Topics of Interest to Demonstrators' (basically the Defence Corps proposal) and the proposal for a militia were overwhelmingly defeated in the referendum, though a motion calling for a

P.A.C. booklet giving advice to demonstrators was carried. The Labor Club was not depressed, as it felt that it was essential to raise the question of the onset of fascism and the need to organize and fight at that particular time. The discussion that followed was of value, and Labor Club leaders pointed to the fact that, in the referendum, there were over 500 students in favour of an M.A.S. Defence Corp, and 300 in favour of the Monash People's Militia.

# LOT'S WIFE

During the first few months of 1971, *Lot's Wife* was produced as a 'total integrated' left-wing paper. The editors, David Dunstan and Rob King, consciously styled it after the American underground press. Whilst few people shared their off-beat ideological position, many students felt that the experimental and imaginative approach they took was long overdue. For the first time, the editors tried to communicate and stimulate new ideas, rather than merely provide what it was assumed the students wanted.

The political and bureaucratic opposition to the paper began even before the first issue hit the stands and the bad relations between the editors and the Publications Committee Chairman and members of the Administrative Executive never improved. The Publications Committee Chairman attacked the paper's advertising policy.

For the editors, there was a need to 'integrate ads. into the face of the paper'.

'When we say "integrate" ads. we mean choose ads. from people whose products fit the consumption habits of readers, make/draw ads. that contribute to the appearance of the paper. Drawing joyous ads. from B.H.P. and the Public Service seems impossible if only from the artistic aspect. Eventually ideology takes hands with aesthetics, possibly for the first time at Monash.' (A broadsheet from the *Lot's Wife* staff.)

Advertisements from companies like C.R.A. were rejected, and advertisements for records, books, films, etc., which

were seen as providing a valuable service, were featured. (Sometimes the advertisers were broke however.)

Increasingly the A.E. and the Publications Committee were setting a new precedent of interfering in the editing of *Lot's Wife*, tacitly challenging the policy of editorial autonomy that had been previously taken for granted. Soon three out of the five people who elected the editors were calling for them to resign.

An M.A.S. meeting was held on 25th March. The meeting instructed the editors to return to their original policy of accepting advertisements without discrimination. In no time at all, the editors provided two more issues which were used as ammunition against them. The first was the threat of prosecution for obscenity over an article by Wendy Bacon and the unrestrained language of the Furry Freak brothers. The other was the sporadic appearance of the supposedly weekly newspaper, not always entirely due to editorial incompetence. In addition, people complained about the experimental layout, frequent printing errors, lack of analytical articles by Monash people and so on. In fact, considering the campaign of perpetual harassment from right-wing critics, it is perhaps amazing that *Lot's Wife* came out at all. The editors complained of

'... being slandered by self-righteous political thugs whose "sense of responsibility" justifies their lying to students in their malevolent broadsheets.' (*Defend Lot's Wife. No. 4.*)

This multitudinous criticism obscured the real issue: whether *Lot's Wife* should be an underground-styled, left-wing alternative to the mass media, or whether it should, to coin a liberal phrase, 'put all points of view'. It is only in this context that we can understand why a polarization of

opinion occurred along political lines. As the right gathered its forces and used the *Lot's Wife* issue to attack the left, so many left-wing' students, (though certainly not all) who were critical of *Lot's Wife* were forced to defend the editors.

After another M.A.S. meeting, which rejected a motion to sack the editors, there followed an election fought solely along 'sack or support' lines, a public opinion poll, and finally the inevitable sacking of the editors. For the rest of the year, the paper was considered inoffensive.

And the fate of Dunstan and King? That is another tale.

'*The liberation of Lot's Wife*', a broadsheet by Elliot Gingold, examined the issue, and explains why it was important.

'Our present society cannot supply what it needs most. It can bring out the worst in people, but rarely the best. Competition, not co-operation, emptiness instead of fulfilment. We must liberate ourselves from what this Capitalist society is making of us. But liberation cannot be a personal thing, we must do it together. No man can be liberated until the whole of society is liberated. Perhaps you don't agree. You may think that you can liberate yourself without a revolution. What is becoming more and more clear to many is, however, that liberation is necessary, be it women's liberation, black liberation, Jewish liberation or people's liberation. The chains are becoming visible.

'That is what I think *Lot's Wife* has been about this year. It has not been a "normal student newspaper", that is true. But these are not "normal" times. *Lot's Wife* has attempted to be a forum in which alternatives to oppression can be investigated and discussed. I do not think that the Editors believe that the only guide to the

future is the Labor Club. Concepts of alternatives come from many sources. But they will never be found in the standard student paper. Try reading *Farrago* or *Rabelais*. the reinforcement of the social order comes through as strongly as it does in the *Sun*.'



# CAMPAIGN AGAINST CLASS BIAS IN EDUCATION

Soon after the reinstatement of the three expelled students, a conference was held (25th May) to discuss, among other things, the practical orientation of the youth and student movement and what should be done next. For a long time, as part of many campaigns, the Labor Club at Monash had been advancing the view that 'the education system' is an institution which, from primary school to University, functions to perpetuate, by course content as well as admissions policy, the class society and to serve those who control that society.

It was decided at the conference to launch the 'Campaign against Class bias in Education' as an attempt to transmit this belief into action. Inequalities in education mirror inequalities in society, and thus a fight against the education system leads people to realize that they live in a class society, in contrast to what they are taught: 'Australia is a classless society'. Thus it is possible for reformists, who see education reform as an end in itself, and revolutionaries, whose aim is the restructuring of *a//* society by revolution, can unite on the education issue. By fighting education inequalities in a revolutionary way, people are fighting capitalism in microcosm. Working class children (and women) are actively excluded from the higher education, and the ruling class deliberately tries to divide students from workers, by calling students 'troublemakers who are wasting taxpayers' money'. Such a campaign would bring students closer to the working people. The students' contribution to the campaign, which should take place on

and off campus, would be to do much of the necessary research and propaganda work, and to formulate specific demands on which to direct action on campus. It was considered essential after the struggle had been initiated in the universities, to develop a mass campaign involving the whole community.

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That inequalities exist in education will certainly not be news to most people. A little analysis reveals the class nature of these inequalities. The retention rates (the proportion of students who attain sixth form after commencing in 1st form) in the different Victorian school systems are: private non-catholic, 94%; private catholic, 31%; government high, 25%.

The elitist nature of private non-catholic school is strikingly obvious. Add to these figures the tiny percentage of technical students who attain H.S.C. standard and it can be seen that the education system effectively perpetuates the class society in which we live.

The question of University entrance is another way to document class bias in education. Tom Roper sums up the situation in his book *'The Myth of Equality'*:

'The characteristics of University entrants can be easily summarized. They are more likely to be children from higher occupational status families, their parents had well above average educational experience, they are likely to be male and from the metropolitan area, and a disproportionate number will have attended private non-catholic schools.' (p.21)

Roper's summary indicates that the class system effectively perpetuates itself through existing institutions such as

education and the family.

The government deliberately perpetuates these education inequalities. For instance, State Aid is distributed to schools on a population basis and not on the basis of need. Also, Commonwealth scholarships are distributed according to academic merit, rather than on the basis of need.

## **THE CAMPAIGN**

In second term support for the education campaign was half-hearted, mainly because attention was focused on the Moratorium, H.A.R.T., July 4th, and the Monash People's Militia. The campaign did not really start to move until third term.

During these hectic times it was found that the Socialist Education Society, formed for the first time in 1971, provided a stable base for the introduction of propaganda and agitation around class bias in education. This was a good example of the decentralization and specialization that is required to build a serious and flexible revolutionary movement.

The main demands put forward, as immediate temporary measures for 1972, were:

1. That the University amend its Admissions regulations to provide for separate quotas, so that the proportion of applicants admitted from private non-catholic schools, private catholic schools, government city schools and government country schools would, in each case, be proportional to the total number of H.S.C. students in each sector.
2. That the money raised from University tuition fees be channelled into special scholarships for working class students.

These demands, in themselves, were not particularly militant or revolutionary. They were intended as the first step in a prolonged education campaign. Several factors limited the effectiveness of the first demand. In the first place, many impoverished government schools would not be able to meet their quotas because their H.S.C. failure rate was much higher. Secondly, and more importantly, most working class children are 'weeded out' long before sixth form. Thirdly, this demand, if implemented by itself, may only provide a more efficient stratification of people into capitalist society. These objections in no way invalidated the demand. The initial demands were envisaged as only the very first stage which would lead to an onslaught on the whole education system. This campaign, as opposed to previous 'reform education' movements, was demand-oriented, on the grounds that it is better to mobilize people around specific demands and build from there, than to expect people to fight in the abstract for some 'perfect education system'. The major slogan of the campaign was 'Education should serve the people, not the rich'.

An M.A.S. meeting on Tuesday, 7th September was the peak of the campaign, which struggled from the start to get off the ground. By this stage five different factions had developed; namely the Communists (Labor Club and Socialist Education Society), the Trotskyites, the D.L.P. Club, the Liberals, and the bizarre Electrical and Chemical Caucus (which concentrated mainly on the 'smash the exams' campaign).

After much debate, the two main demands outlined above were carried.

Another M.A.S. meeting was called for Monday, 13th September, the day of a Council meeting. Massive banners were prepared in the Union foyer. Two broadsheets, *'The*

*Next Step'* and *'Support Direct Action Against Class Bias in Education'* were published. The motion prepared for the meeting called for a limited twenty-four hour sit-in in the university offices, to be called off at any time steps were initiated to implement the demands.

However, a quorum was not obtained, and the campaign rapidly faded.

But the inequalities still exist, and will have to be fought harder in the future, as capitalist ideology is firmly entrenched in the contents of all courses taught in schools and universities. One of the main barriers to raising interest in the campaign was the traditional third term exam fever which always draws students away from politics, for most members of the left had been so involved in other off-campus struggles that their attention was not focused on the Education Campaign until third term.

Even then, the left can be criticized for stereotyped methods of work. Attempts to launch the campaign were made through M.A.S. meetings, or 'from the top'. (This shows the limitations of M.A.S. as a political vehicle). There was insufficient mass work, and too little attention given to finding out what the students really thought, especially those who do not go to M.A.S. general meetings. The left consequently found itself paralyzed when it could not raise a quorum at an M.A.S. meeting. Even the motions that did get through M.A.S. meetings were arrogantly ignored by Administration.

The education issue will be raised again, after these mistakes have been corrected. There is an urgent need in the left for more mass work and to be less dependent on M.A.S. meetings.

# **Dr. MATHESON**

On A.B.C.'s *'Monday Conference'* (14th June 1971), Dr. J. A. L. Matheson declared that 'students come to University to sit at the feet of their professors'. It is tempting to suggest that this archaic notion may result in a failure to understand why today's students, having had their fill of professorial boot polish, are in revolt. Such an explanation is facile. Dr. Matheson's dilemma is due to an inability to synthesize his own contradictory views on the role and functioning of a modern university and on the role of a Vice-Chancellor in that university. This inability is, in turn, due to a complete commitment to Western Capitalist Society, and such political conservatism inevitably brings him into conflict with radical students. Thus he not only fails to understand students, but is committed to a policy of crushing student rebellion, which threatens the values he holds, and the society he values.

## **THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY**

Dr. Matheson has consistently stated that 'the function of the University is Scholarship and Truth' and 'their task is to bring to intellectual maturity the most promising young minds of each generation'. Further, that universities as communities of scholars, are the 'highest point that civilization has yet reached'. In order to perform this function however, 'the University as a whole must be politically neutral whatever the belief of its individual members', for 'the policy of neutrality is for the long term benefit of the University itself as an institution', and the Universities must 'be politically neutral so that they can be intellectually productive'.

However, despite this advocacy for neutrality, the University is clearly seen as a part of society, dependent on it for financial support; '. . . the majority of Council members should continue to come from the community at large on the main ground that a publicly-financed institution should ultimately be governed by a predominantly "lay" body' (*Sound*, No 7). The part played by Council members in this process is spelled out in the following statement: 'these highly influential and highly competent industrialists and businessmen not only bring expertize to the Council's affairs but, on occasion, they have been responsible for considerable funds reaching the University that would otherwise not have done so' (Vestes, vol. XIV, pp 110).

Thus to maintain the University as Dr. Matheson sees it, he must have businessmen on Council and be subservient to the Government. Radical activity is a threat to both these sources of income, and therefore must be stopped.

'We've got to persuade the Government to produce money for things we want . . . The whole object of having a Discipline Statute . . . is to try to regulate the conduct of our society . . . Now the question arises therefore what will happen if we were to pass a Statute which could be shown to be of such a nature that it would not permit the University to conduct its affairs properly, to keep itself in order . . What I'm really worried about is that it will be said that we haven't got sufficient power—I think we need something like 17.3 (double jeopardy clause, see chapters on 1968 and 1969) . . . if a student commits a crime of a kind which is relevant to his membership of the University it doesn't seem to matter much whether it's done off the campus or on it.' (Dr. Matheson's speech to P.A.C. on the Discipline Statute and 17.3, 1969.)

The providers of funds therefore exert political power over the University, and the purpose of power they exert is to maintain their own position as the recipients of social, economic and political power. They want to see a return on their money, and, as Dr. Matheson puts it 'the University gives good value for money'.

However, Dr. Matheson advocates much closer links with society than result merely from a financial dependence. 'In these days, when the ivory tower should be as near as possible to the market place . . .', he proposed the Monash University Scientific and Industrial Community (M.U.S.I.C.), in 'an attempt to make University expertise more recognized by, and therefore more accessible to, industry . . .' (*Lot's Wife*, vol. 10, No 15). Further quotes from the same source illustrate Dr. Matheson's idea of University service to the community:

' . . one must first recognize the Universities' involvement with society, in all faculties at many levels, and then go on to deplore that society does not make full use of the immense resources of talent, knowledge and enterprise which lie latent in the Universities . . . Unfortunately Australian industry seems to be increasingly derivative and it is therefore very important to bring indigenous new ideas, inventions, processes and methods to the notice of the people *who are in a position to put them to advantage* (Author's emphasis—University serving big business?) . . . It is the locally-owned industry, the smaller ones, that can expect to benefit most from such a service, and perhaps as a result to compete more effectively with the strongly-hacked companies with overseas affiliation.'

Dr. Matheson believes the University can help the economy in this way . . . 'without political commitment. In terms of



economics and technology'. He appears to fail to understand that this is a value commitment to a particular type of economy — capitalist. As will be shown later, this stems from his unquestioning acceptance of the Western Capitalist status quo. The contribution of the University to the existing political and economic system is the production of graduates. Even these graduates reflect the class inequalities of the political system, as they invariably come from middle and upper middle class families. Thus the University is an integral part of the apparatus which maintains this social system.

Clearly, his stand of 'neutrality' is a political position, tacitly accepting the existing social and economic power structure. To maintain that this stand is truly neutral is complete nonsense.

## **THE RED CANCER!**

These contradictory views are not, however, the result of a confused mind, but from a consciously political position as a supporter of Western 'democracy' and an opponent of Communism. This position, as well as his concept of the role of the University, is responsible for his opposition to radicals.

'It is of course obvious that the capacity of the United States. in its struggle with Russia and/or China, is being weakened not only at home, but because of similar student action, abroad. In Turkey for instance the United States Ambassador was harassed recently and the government is under some pressure to get rid of American military installations. These disturbances are therefore just as effective from a communist point of view as if they had been deliberately stimulated.' (Study Leave Report to Council, 14th July, 1969.)

Dr. Matheson took a political stand himself in 1967 when preventing the collection of funds for the N.L.F. because it was 'repugnant to so many people that it should not be permitted on campus'. He believed that a Forum on Vietnam including as speakers the Minister for the Army, Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Santamaria presented 'virtually all points of view'. His political views emerge in a speech at the Sunday Forum of Wesley Church, published in the Monash Reporter.

'Finally I come to the barren wasteland of political theory which within my lifetime has been shown to hold no promise whatever for mankind . . . Generalizing from this disappointing experience (Czechoslovakia) I assert' that Maoism also will prove to be defective and that a future generation of radical students, recognizing that the little red thoughts are mere platitudes, will turn elsewhere for their inspiration.'

From beneath this cynical academic veneer, he some-what piously advocates 'more respect for the great moral principles, which are so disarmingly simple that they are not convincing to the sophisticated youth of today.' Whilst suitable for the Church address, this remedy is of tenuous relevance to reality. Dr. Matheson is a political conservative in a politically conservative society, attempting to constrain Monash (which he has referred to as 'my' University) into an equally strangled role.

## **THE ROLE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

But Dr. Matheson is more than just a campus conservative. He is, after all, the Vice-Chancellor, and a long-standing technocrat. His task is to 'exercise a general superintendence over the educational and Administrative affairs of the University, and (he) shall be responsible for maintaining the discipline of the university': he has the

'responsibility to try to give leadership in academic affairs'. The Vice-Chancellor is the 'catalyst of his Universities' progress and the agent who facilitates that progress'.

Throughout the large number of speeches and writings of Dr. Matheson, little mention is made of education. On the contrary, managerial ideas are constantly stressed. Administrative matters have become an obsession to the neglect of his educative function. Of undergraduate courses, he said 'I think our structure is already pretty satisfactory . . . (it needs) tidying up rather than wholesale reconstruction'. Generally, 'I confess to being conservative in the sense that I see nothing wrong with the constitution of Australian Universities'. He sees no need for new courses to attack current social problems. These problems would be conveyed to students by 'sensitive' staff, and by 'self-education' outside formal courses. Formal courses should not be biased in a particular direction, however enlightened that direction may be, because University teaching should be impartial and technically competent graduates are needed to solve the technically difficult problems (Monash Reporter, No 5, 1971). The idea that social responsibility in graduates should be 'spontaneous, not forced' indicates the paucity of Dr. Matheson's idea of education. The destruction of the biosphere shows the necessity for something more than 'self-education'. His cynicism on these matters again occurs in the statement that 'students' interest in pollution and the environment would be more convincing if they helped keep Monash clean' (*Sun*, 1st March, 1972).

On Administrative matters, however, he is much more specific. His views on management are undemocratic and thoroughly elitist, with power and authority vested on the hands of 'experts' and only limited participation by the students.

'... students, being transient members of the University. should not have a dominant say in matters other than those which concern them exclusively ... professors are special and should have special rights just as they carry special responsibilities ... we cannot logically subject a professor to popular vote' (Vestes, vol. XIV, p. 110), "... Universities are essentially aristocratic and hierarchical in character and simply cannot discharge their responsibilities by adopting exclusively egalitarian policies. This is not to say that they should be run on authoritarian lines, or that there should not be proper consultation and discussion of issues, but it is to say that in our community responsibility is not uniformly distributed. Before you conclude that this is a reactionary attitude in these democratic days let me remind you that you yourselves have been selected to come here ...' (Sound, No. 20).

Monash is constantly referred to in dehumanizing terms as a big organization (without any examination of its inherent values), with 'desirable professor/staff/student ratios of 1:10:100;' as institutions they are 'exceptionally efficient', and so on.

Thus as Vice-Chancellor he is preoccupied with administration to the exclusion of anything else. The reason for this obsession lies in the conflict between his ideas of the University and of society and his arch enemy, radical students.

## **DR. MATHESON VS. THE STUDENTS**

It was probably Dr. Matheson's trip to America in 1969 which precipitated this obsession. The fear of disruption of the University and the spectre of the American experience lie at the core of his attitudes to student unrest, and his tactics in

attempting to deal with this 'phenomenon'. The result is a limited, short-sighted and distorted view of Australian student protest (and probably of American students). The near hysteria of the attitude is illustrated by Dr. Matheson's words:

'to make a series of visits to Universities in different parts of the world in 1969 is to undertake a journey which has some of the nightmare qualities of science fiction: the triffids are springing up everywhere and no-one knows how to keep them in check, still less how to cut them down. But this is not a nightmare, alas, from which one can awaken into the clear morning of a sane and orderly world. Everywhere the harsh reality is of Universities under attack, in chaos, closed or open only when under police protection. Everywhere the reality is of student rebellion, sometimes violent, sometimes encouraged or even stimulated by a minority of academics, not infrequently aggravated by real deficiencies in the system' (14th July, 1969).

From this contradictory view of the University, and this obsession with keeping the University open (on his terms) gained from his American visit, Dr. Matheson then examines student protest. He leans heavily on an article by John Searle entitled 'The Anatomy of Student Revolt', reprinted for everyone's benefit in the 1971 Orientation Handbook, and on the experiences of Clark Kerr, Berkeley Campus reactionary. There are three main points to the 'analysis': the aim of the students, their methods, and the tactics to be used against them.

The aims of the students are embodied in the 'weak underbelly' theory.

'The militant students are revolutionaries whose object is to destroy the University because it is the most accessible and vulnerable section of society.

' . . for these students to choose as their point of attack the most enlightened areas of society, is so crazy as to call into question the motives and even the sanity of those who so behave.'

These students are a 'disruptive minority':

'But there is within the student body a minority group . . . which demands the right to impose its own conditions . . . and to go further than that and back its demands by the threats of occupation and even by the actual occupation of University premises'.

Their aim is to 'seek to use academic tolerance for political purposes'; and finally to 'close the University down'. This minority group then selects issues and manipulates the student body.

'Then some particular issue. if possible one to which the University authorities can be said to have "over-reacted", is chosen for special attention, and some sort of a confrontation is organized. With luck a good deal of general student support appears; if so, that issue is pushed as hard as possible; if not, it is dropped and another is selected.

The issue of open discipline hearing is a perfect example of an issue which has been selected and then misrepresented . . . The present student mass meetings are perfectly devised for manipulation.

There is a great bulk of moderate students . . . these students endeavour to change the system through

democratic means unless they are manipulated into violent action.'

Tactics are basically two-pronged, the first being to isolate the 'minority' and secondly to constantly appeal to the 'silent majority' to restore order. The discrediting of the 'minority' is aided by the press.

'Serious damage has been done to the University . . . The student body must think what they can do to restore the reputation of a Monash degree . . . The responsibility rests on you, do not let this University be destroyed.

I believe that this University faces a very serious situation and I think that it behoves every one of you who is listening to me to be ready to play some part in the crisis that has been brought upon us by a small minority of reckless people.

While they (the students) are busy studying, the wreckers may bring the place down about their ears . . . The true University spirit, which is the highest point that civilization has yet reached (!) is in danger of being destroyed.'

The University staff, too, are subjected to the same propaganda, with talk of destructive minorities and appeals to the silent majority.

'On the other hand the world at large has difficulty in seeing why disaffected members of a staff, whose chief objective appears to be the destruction of their University, should be continued in employment.' (Report to Professorial Board Meeting, No. 9, 1971).

'Universities will never return to their former stable state unless the academics decide that they prefer an orderly

life, in which they can pursue their teaching and research in a scholarly way, to the present turbulent politicking in which scholarship is at a discount. If the academics come down on the side of order then disorder will vanish.' (Monash Reporter, 1st March. 1971.)

The final tactic to be used by the University Administration, then, is the calling of police on to campus and the closure of the University. The anticipated public reaction will (hopefully) further isolate the radicals.

'If my colleagues and I felt that a situation had arisen which required help from the police, we should not hesitate to ask for it.'

These are the techniques being used at Monash, to eliminate student dissent. As stated by John Searle:

'A confident Administration bent on defending intellectual values and consequently determined to destroy the power of its essentially anti-intellectual (sic) adversary, can generally win.'

The approach is clear. Dr. Matheson plays the role of the fatherly prophet of doom. Using Searle's model, he predicts disaster at the hands of the 'wreckers', in order to elicit, or solicit, the support of the 'silent majority'. The irony is that Searle, a professor of Philosophy at Berkeley, has apparently changed his views. He now insists that 'The picture of a silent majority and a radical minority on campus is false . . . If anything, there is a growing feeling of class consciousness among students' (*Newsweek*, 19th October, 1970, p 52).

The radical minority idea may have once been true, but it is quite false now — the majority of students want a qualitative change in society. The differences appear in the methods of achieving the change, and the causes of the



current social ills, in short, in the political awareness of the students. The Administration and Dr. Matheson, by attempting to dissipate the 'danger' of disruption to attributing it to a handful of anarchistic students, actually intensifies the radicalization. If they were to admit that radicals were numerous and not bent on destruction, they would have to answer questions they obviously wish to avoid. They would have to explain why the left has support, and why the University Administration is committed to crushing the left. They would have to admit that the University is a bastion of reaction.

The left at Monash has never wished the University to close, and has stated many times quite categorically that it wants it open. The question is, 'open on whose terms?' — as a fortress of conservatism, the servant of a corrupt society, or as a catalyst for social change and a servant of all the people in society, not only the upper echelons of power and wealth. These arguments of destructive minorities deliberately obscure this basic issue.

By continually invoking an atmosphere of crisis it is Dr. Matheson, not the left, who does the manipulation. He himself calls general meetings of the University when he believes the 'silent majority' will be on his side, and regularly hints that he may have to resign if things get worse. The spectre of America also has the effect of polarizing staff and students. Many staff members, fearing for their positions, will rally to the Vice-Chancellor's side in a crisis, and it is therefore in his interest to convey the feeling of crisis in statements like 'the University is in danger of being destroyed'.

In 1968, it was Dr. Matheson who jeopardized the value of the Monash degrees stating that the political troubles at Monash would lower their status. This approach is usually

guaranteed to win the support of moderate students, many of whom regard a degree as a meal ticket. He also tries to invoke a strange sort of patriotic pride with appeals to students to protect this 'great University'. All these approaches are aimed at isolating the radicals. The appeals to students to use the 'right channels' as a means of expressing dissent are aimed at institutionalizing, and therefore crushing dissent.

The students do not 'select' issues to get support. They protest at the University, and attempt to reform it, simply because they work there, and can see that it perpetrates the values of a society responsible for the Vietnam War, racial discrimination and other forms of oppression. These matters which concern students are cynically referred to as 'sacred topics' in Searle's first analysis. Dr. Matheson's blind use of this analysis founders when he attempts to examine student unrest in Canada, which he could not directly attribute to the 'selection' of issues like Vietnam war or racial discrimination. Perhaps he should do some deeper thinking.

Dr. Matheson admits that he does not understand radicals. 'I do not pretend to understand the motives of these people (radicals) but I do understand why they get some support. He goes on to describe society's ills, and says:

'We need look no further for the source of student unrest. We need not be surprised by it, indeed we might well hope that from it might come the salvation of mankind were it not that the activist students themselves have made stupid mistakes in their eagerness to find an instant solution.'

The undercurrent of ridicule of radicals is also an isolating factor. Searle himself openly denigrates the radicals.

'He (the undergraduate) feels deeply insecure and the stridency of his rhetoric should not conceal from us the depth of his insecurity.

The apparent passionate convictions of most university demonstrators are in fact terribly fragile, and when away from the crowd many of them are fairly easily talked out of their wildest fantasies. But what demonstrators perceive as the highest of idealism often looks from the outside like a mixture of vandalism and imbecilic dogmatism.'

But the real point is that Dr. Matheson does not fail to understand radicals. He understands very well that they are a threat to his values. He is a committed anti-communist conservative, as are most liberal academics in Australia. His ideas on the neutrality of the University are hogwash. His concept of the 'community of scholars' is irrelevant. The University is a responsible, integral and on-going part of a society based on oppression and exploitation. These are the reasons for his attitudes, and for statements such as:

'Contemporary student protests differ from those of earlier generations only in that they flout previously accepted conventions about how one should behave in and towards one's University. They are no more nor no less shocking than the cultural revolution in China which finally destroyed the traditional respect for the old which used to characterize that country.'

# OVERVIEW

## ON PROVOCATION

Dr. Matheson's theory of student rebellion, described in the last chapter, has the appearance of plausibility. After all, isn't it true that crises occur at Monash because of some Labor Club action which has provoked the Administration to 'over-react' and which has then involved the mass of students in a campaign against this 'over-reaction'? Couldn't it be that the Labor Club is deliberately stirring up trouble in order to bring the University to a halt?

There is an obvious flaw in that argument. It is simply this. If Dr. Matheson is convinced, as he says he is, that the Labor Club is deliberately trying to provoke the authorities to over-react and bring about a confrontation between Administration and students, then why does he 'over-react' time after time and bring about that very confrontation? If there is something stereotyped about the Labor Club's pattern of rallying students in support of democratic rights when Admin tries to discipline the left for some 'provocative' action, isn't there something much more stereotyped about the way Admin unfailingly is provoked and appears so willing and almost eager to be provoked by the left's actions?

Let us look at this idea of 'provocation' more closely and in the light of what has been revealed in the previous chapters.

When the Labor Club initiated direct financial aid to the N.L.F. in 1967, they were undoubtedly being provocative and could expect a hostile reaction from the Government and press. After all, this was partly their intention . . . the aid

itself was insignificant, but the political implications of Australians being willing to aid an 'enemy' in defiance of the government, were important.

But can it be said that the Labor Club was provoking the Administration of Monash University? Should they have expected to have their activities banned on campus and publicly discredited by the Vice-Chancellor? Was the left being 'provocative' when it even went to the lengths of making the Labor Club's N.L.F. Aid Committee an 'autonomous non university body' and passively accepted the ban on their collecting non-medical aid on campus? Wasn't it rather Dr. Matheson who was trying to force a confrontation when he went further and banned all collections for aid in the name of University 'neutrality'? Wasn't it Dr. Matheson who was being provocative when he disciplined three students merely to show his support for a repressive Act of Parliament which had not even become law yet? Wasn't it provocative for the Discipline Committee to ignore student requests for no disciplinary measures to be taken when those requests were expressed peacefully through the S.R.C.? Wasn't it even more provocative for the University Council to destroy the transcript of the closed discipline appeal rather than let it be read by students?

This was the first 'confrontation' between students and authorities at Monash. It first raised the question in students' minds of the legitimacy of University Discipline being used against them. Yet in all of it there were no sit-ins, no occupations, none of the 'disruption' and 'threat to destroy the University' that we are told is the sole reason for Admin's determination to crush the radical left. Can any honest person argue that it was really Labor Club provocation which caused the Administration to 'over-react' in 1967, and that it was not rather the Administration's

conscious policy to attack radicals for their entirely peaceful anti-war activity?

Again, *Print* is obviously a 'provocative' publication, but wasn't it rather more provocative to threaten to censor it and other student publications through the Discipline Statute as Dr. Matheson did in 1967 and 1968?

From 1968 onwards, students increased their involvement in off-campus demonstrations, particularly against the Vietnam War. To the ruling class who have conscripted Australian youth as cannon fodder for the U.S. war of aggression in Indo-China, this, of course, is provocative. It is met with bashings, arrests, fines and gaol. Convictions at demonstrations can now lead to sacking or refusal of employment or a studentship if you are a teacher or a teacher-trainee. This of course is 'natural'. After all every other type of worker knows what will happen to him if he is 'political', so why shouldn't it happen to University graduates?

But in anybody's terms, how could it be said that these demonstrations were a plot to provoke Monash University? The first sit-in at Monash occurred when students heard that the University intended to define its disciplinary powers to cover all acts 'prejudicial to the interests of the University' whether committed on or off the campus. Students correctly saw this as an attempt to curtail their off-campus political activities, such as participation in demonstrations. They ended this first sit-in as soon as Dr. Matheson reassured them that he sympathized with their objections. He proudly announced to the press that it was all a 'misunderstanding', that he had no intention of introducing any objectionable statute and that if he had believed what the students believed about the proposed statute he 'would have marched too'. The absolute hypocrisy of these statements

can be seen by examining the following definition of 'an act of misconduct' specifically *approved* by Dr. Matheson for the Papua-New Guinea Institute of Technology.

' . . . if it is an act done by students as such and occurs outside the precincts of the Institute and is, in the opinion of the Director, of such a nature as to be detrimental to the interests of the Institute or of its members as such or as to bring the Institute or the staff or student body into public ridicule or contempt.'

This obnoxious clause is exactly what the 1968 sit-in at Monash was all about. It is quite clearly directed against student participation in off-campus demonstrations. The Statute was enacted in 1969 by the Council of the Institute, of which Dr. Matheson is Chairman. The Statute, which is exactly duplicated in the Discipline Statute of the University of Papua-New Guinea, is based on the Monash draft condemned by M.A.S. The major difference is that the objectionable features which were implicit in the Monash version, were spelt out explicitly in the New Guinea one, so that in clauses like the one just quoted, the real intentions of the authorities were clearly revealed. Far from 'marching' through the streets of Port Moresby against this fascist legislation it appears that Dr. Matheson was actually its author! Unless we are to believe that Dr. Matheson is a racist who regards white Monash students as needing less 'guidance' than black Nuigini ones, then it is hard to escape the conclusion that he was 'not quite telling the truth' when he assured Monash students that he is both a racist *and* a liar, but our lawyers advise us to stick to one or the other . . .!)

As an imperialist academic, Dr. Matheson was prominent in the establishment of both these colonial educational institutions and is a member of both their governing

Councils. He is also a shareholder in C.R.A., one of the major foreign monopolies exploiting the Nuigini people. The reading for anyone interested in the study of Australian 'paternalist' oppression in Nuigini.

In view of the struggle against provisions in the Monash Status of Students Statute, allowing for the exclusion of students with serious criminal records, and the indignant denials that these provisions indicated a desire by the University to extend control over the private off-campus conduct of students, it is interesting to note the provisions made in the corresponding New Guinea Statute:

'9. (The Academic Board may hold an enquiry for the purpose of considering whether to exclude someone where) . . . (c) the conduct of the applicant or student has at any time been such that a determination should be made for the protection, within the precincts, of the Institute of-

(i) any property of the Institute, any student or member of the staff of the Institute; or (ii) the person of any student or member of staff . . . (d) the applicant has been excluded from any other tertiary educational institution on ground which, if it had taken place while he was a member of the Institute, would in the opinion of the Board of the Institute have led to his exclusion from the Institute . . . '

Needless to say, the New Guinea Statutes do not even have the pretence of student 'participation' on the Discipline Committee. . . . another principle which Dr. Matheson claimed to support. Not knowing any of this at the time, students accepted the assurances given by Dr. Matheson and the Council and took no further action about discipline. Was it then 'Labor Club provocation' which caused Admin to



re-introduce in 1969, exactly the measures students had thought agreement was reached about in 1968? Was it 'provocative' of M.A.S. to demand that these measures be unconditionally withdrawn? Was it provocative of the Labor Club to hold a demonstration in the Administration building when Admin refused to even negotiate about the M.A.S. demands, which Admin was supposed to have agreed with the previous year?

Certainly Administration must have thought so, because the Council meeting was cancelled and half a dozen students were given suspended expulsions for 'disrupting it'. Yet the students did not try to prevent the discipline 'trials' being held, and only when the Committee refused to allow an open hearing (or even closed circuit TV) did students force their way into the meeting room. Was this provocation, or was it Admin that was being provocative in trying to discipline students for holding a peaceful demonstration and then disciplining them in private? When the authorities charged another batch of students for 'acting in a manner likely to disrupt a meeting of the discipline committee', and handed down suspended sentences of expulsion for one or two years, M.A.S. did precisely nothing about it beyond declaring that the sentences should be ignored. Was this 'provocative'?

At the beginning of 1970, the Science Faculty Board excluded Albert Langer on phoney 'academic' grounds. If this was due to his 'provocation' in taking an active part in the struggle in 1969, then why wasn't he expelled for 'acts of misconduct' in a disciplinary trial? Quite clearly this action was not an 'over-reaction to provocation', but a carefully thought-out surprise attack on left-wing students. It was a partially successful attack, because many students refused to believe that Admin was lying to them about Langer's academic qualifications. When M.A.S. finally woke

up to what had happened, and a meeting voted overwhelmingly to demand his immediate readmission, but took no direct action, Administration simply took no notice of this at all. Later on Dr. Matheson even remarked that the left-wing had 'dropped' the issue in order to stir on other things. Presumably the failure to occupy a building was regarded by him as indicating a lack of interest. (However, the authorities were made cautious enough to allow Langer to enrol in the following year.) This same extremely provocative attitude on the part of Admin has been shown on quite a number of occasions. Despite all the 'moderates' say about 'reasonable men' and the virtues of 'reasoned discourse' and 'negotiations', it is a simple fact that while M.A.S. has almost *invariably* won either complete or partial victory through direct action, it has *never* won any demand it has made that was not backed up by a threat of action.

As a matter of fact Admin's arrogance is so great that it usually doesn't even bother to reply to, comment on, or consider M.A.S. demands that don't carry a threat. Examples are:

(1) *Car parking*. M.A.S. voted to strongly denounce the use of student fees for this purpose and condemned arrogance of Admin in ignoring student views. However, it decided not to take further action in view of Administration's threat to turn a relatively minor issue into a crisis by calling the police. '*Sound*' reported this as 'M.A.S. accepts parking fees'.

(2) *Class bias in education*. M.A.S. demanded that quota restrictions should be eased for the 1972 intake on students from working class backgrounds. Since no action was threatened, Admin not only made no concessions whatever, thus excluding a few hundred more working class kids this year, but didn't even bother to reply.

Many more examples can be obtained from a search through M.A.S. minutes.

This rather 'provocative' attitude has not gone unnoticed by Monash students, who these days generally couple their demands with time specifications for their institution, just so Administration will sit up and take notice.

The first and only example of left-wing students taking action against Admin that wasn't directly and immediately in response to an attack by Admin on them was the three-day occupation of the Careers and Appointments office in 1970. This was a limited 'protest' action, intended as a preliminary to the 4th July demonstrations. The 'only' provocation' from Administration was of course the fact that Imperialist firms engaging in such criminal acts as war profiteering from the manufacture of anti-personnel weapons, were being allowed to use the offices for recruiting. The action was taken by the Labor Club without the support of M.A.S., and indeed, M.A.S. subsequently disassociated itself from it and voted to support the continued functioning of the office, although it voted against allowing Admin to deal with students as it wished. It is perhaps worth mentioning that in the subsequent struggle, M.A.S. views changed considerably and it is possible that today that students would not only have opposed discipline but would also have supported the action.

The fact that Admin actually expelled students involved in the occupation cannot be regarded as 'over-reaction to provocation'. It was a carefully planned action, with Administration deliberately dragging out the trials until the vacation, and not announcing the sentences until weeks after the verdict. Later Dr. Matheson was to make his classic announcement that the trials were prolonged 'entirely due

to the delaying tactics of the defendants' (who did not even attend the hearings!)

Wasn't it 'provocative' to expel these students under the old and discredited Discipline Statute, to refuse to even discuss these measures when M.A.S. overwhelmingly condemned them, and to sit back impassively while students expressed their opposition in overwhelming votes at large meetings, referenda and a boycott of lectures? Was it really 'provocative' for M.A.S. to finally hold a twenty-four hour sit-in of the Administration building, after every other channel had been tried and Administration was obviously delaying announcing the Appeals results till the end of term? Wasn't it the most extreme provocation imaginable for Admin to placate student anger by agreeing to hold a referendum of the entire University population, and then to refuse to abide by the result when they lost, and when exam-time had finally arrived? Yet the reaction to this by M.A.S. was only to almost unanimously demand at a meeting of virtually the entire University, that the Council should resign. In addition a Council meeting which had been held in St. Kilda to escape student wrath, was forced to disband when students tracked them down to their hiding place!

It was not until the following year that M.A.S. really began to reply to this monstrous betrayal of democratic principles, by physically obstructing the Council from meeting on campus until it agreed to abide by the referendum results. If this was 'provocative' then it should be mentioned that not only did it follow the complete failure of the totally unrepresentative Council to respond to reason for several months, but it also followed a really vicious 'provocation' by Admin when new discipline charges were laid (and later withdrawn) against about thirty more students during the vacation, with the apparent aim of having a 'purge' while other students were away from campus.

Administration's response was, as usual, to 'over-react'. Having already tried injunctions threatening students with gaol for entering the Administration building, their new 'over-reaction' was to make this threat a reality by having four busloads of police waiting nearby at Oakleigh police station for the 'go-ahead'. Only when students remained firm in the face of this did Admin suddenly cease to 'over-react' and decide to extend 'clemency' to the expelled students.

A detailed review of this expulsions struggle lasting from late 1970 to early 1971 makes it very difficult to sustain the 'provocation/over-reaction' theory. Events read more like a consciously fought out battle between Administration and M.A.S.; with Admin determined to expel militants and seeking to isolate the Labor Club from student support, and the Labor Club consciously fighting back and seeking to isolate Admin.

For those who support the simple thesis that 'the Labor Club wants to get police on campus so as to have a crisis that will close the University and radicalize the students', it must be rather hard to explain some of the stands which that club took. For example, when Dr. Matheson announced that he would inevitably call police if the next Council meeting was blocked the Labor Club could have won its supposed 'hearts desire' by simply blocking the meeting, a decision already approved by M.A.S. Instead it recognized that Matheson's aim was to rally all those who didn't want a crisis around him, and adopted the tactic of reversing the position by offering to have the expelled students sign formal undertakings to 'be good in future'.

Even at the very last minute, when M.A.S. had committed itself to blocking a Council meeting if the students were not re-admitted, it was the Labor Club which pro-posed that the

demand should be reduced to the proposal that a new referendum be held. When this was adopted it was the Labor Club which called on the 2000 or more students assembled on the steps of Administration not to carry out the M.A.S. resolution immediately (thus immediately bringing on the police, who were waiting) but to let the Council meeting proceed while Administration could contemplate the numbers waiting outside, and then block them inside if they reached the wrong decision. Finally Dr. Matheson and Council made a complete back-down.

All of this is consistent with the view that the left consciously plans its tactics in order to isolate Administration to the maximum, and build the greatest possible sup-port among staff and students. This can be regarded as 'sinister' or 'natural' depending on one's standpoint. But none of it is consistent with the claim that the left is simply out to cause a 'confrontation' at any price.

If the provocation theory is inadequate to explain student rebellion, what then is the explanation? We say that the explanation lies in the fact that most *students* want the university to *serve the people* instead of being a training ground for the administrators of capitalist society; that science and engineering students *don't want* to have to learn how to make better profits by thinking up ways to make workers 'redundant' and exploit them better by polluting the environment, by designing cars for profit instead of safety, by inventing bigger and better bombs, defoliants, gasses, to drop on the Vietnamese people and so on; that arts students *don't want* to be trained as teachers in order to indoctrinate young kids in the virtues of conformity and 'discipline' in Victoria's ramshackle, moth-eaten, 'education system'; that Economics students *don't want* to have to learn how to administer the big Banks, Insurance firms, Oil and Chemical Companies and other (mainly

Yankee) monopolies which exploit the working people; that medicine and law students *don't want* to profit from the sicknesses and troubles of others in a society where poor people cannot afford decent medical treatment and only the rich can obtain help from the Courts. It is because of this basic dissatisfaction with their role in society and with the nature of our society in general that students rebel and become involved in radical activity. And it is when Admin has attempted to limit this radical activity that students have risen up and directed their rebellion against the University authorities themselves.

## **ON OPPORTUNISM**

This brings us to a characteristic feature of the Administration at Monash, which unlike most of its other features, is not entirely identical with other reactionary institutions. This is its *opportunism*.

All reactionaries are opportunistic in that they do not dare to openly explain their principles but resort to lies and distortions in order to cover up their position. This appears to be an inevitable consequence of being reactionary! But the Monash Administration is far more opportunistic than most and this had been its undoing.

Its strategy, when faced with student protest has invariably been to avoid direct confrontations on questions of principle, but to twist and manoeuvre, pretending to be on the students' side, while actually stabbing them in the back. This always has short term advantages but it equally certainly results in long term defeat. By consistently acting in this way the Monash authorities have, more than most, undermined their own 'authority' over the radicals. They have created a situation where, in times of crisis very few people believe what they say, and even within the

Administration itself splits and conflicts arise because nobody trusts anybody else.

An obvious example was the holding of the referendum in 1970, and then ignoring its result. This gave Administration the short term advantage of delaying matters by a few days until exam time so that direct action could not be used to force readmission of the students that year. But the long term effects were quite disastrous. It created the situation in which there was a total breach between the authorities and the people they administer—a situation which Winston Churchill advised should never be allowed to occur in any colony!

A similar example was the deliberate lying over Albert Langer's academic qualifications. This resulted in a temporary victory, but in the long run it not only made the minority of students who were defeated so bitterly angry that their determination to hit back at the authorities was strengthened many-fold; it also resulted in the disillusionment of those students who later discovered that they had been deceived.

Probably the most significant example has been the one with which we introduce this chapter. By continually presenting the problem as a 'plot to close the university' Administration has often succeeded in diverting attention away from its real purpose of suppressing radical students. But there are two long term disadvantages which Dr. Matheson has only just started to notice. The first is that with five years of 'crises', 'imminent danger that the University will close' and threats that the Vice-Chancellor will resign (leaving the students to the tender mercies of someone perhaps even more reactionary), people are starting to wonder when some of these events are actually going to happen. The Monash Administration is beginning to



find itself in the same position as the little boy who cried 'wolf' too often . . . nobody is listening. The second problem is much more serious. By indignantly and dishonestly denying that it wished to crack down on radical political activity, and insisting that University disciplinary measures are solely concerned with 'disruption' Admin has created a situation where it has totally destroyed whatever 'moral basis' it might have had. Even though the indignant denials enabled Admin to successfully discipline students who were active in the campaigns against controls on participation in off-campus activities and on the entry of students with 'records', this has not deterred the students who were involved, or discouraged M.A.S. from continuing to resort to direct action whenever it has felt important principles were at stake. But they have created a situation where the University can't act against the ordinary political activities of its students without expecting a massive upheaval.

Another important example of opportunism is the Monash Administration's practice of always seeking to force a 'crisis' whenever students 'confront' them. This is done by issuing wild statements about 'violence' to the press, cancelling lectures to call students out for solemn lectures by the Vice-Chancellor, 'escalating' the situation by threatening to call the police or taking out Supreme Court injunctions that threaten to gaol students, or laying fresh discipline charges. It has the short-term effect of creating an hysterical atmosphere in which militant students feel isolated from the general public and in danger of repression. and are therefore less willing to take action, and of involving numbers of students and staff in a campaign to 'save the University from destruction'. The immediate result is usually that larger numbers of students turn up to M.A.S. meetings. The new arrivals not having yet experienced the 'proper channels' for themselves, tend to be more in favour of 'moderation' and vote down motions for direct action. In the long term

however, the involvement of these 'moderate' students only strengthens the campaign because they very soon cease to be moderate. (Reactionaries are incapable of grasping the concept that things sometimes transform themselves into their opposite under given conditions. Because a student holds reactionary ideas when he hasn't been involved in M.A.S. meetings, this doesn't mean he won't change when he does become involved.) Another aspect is that after long over-use the tactic begins to be less effective so that students and staff begin to blame Administration, rather than the Labor Club for 'disrupting things'. After all who really has the power to close the University, and who really spends all their time talking about it? This 'backlash' particularly arose in 1971 when Dr. Matheson threatened to call police simply so that the Council could continue meeting on campus without acknowledging the results of the referendum which he himself had organized. In the resulting 'crisis', even quite reactionary staff members realized that M.A.S. had made all the concessions it could and was determined to defeat the expulsions even if this meant a violent fight with the police, and they therefore turned their energies away from denouncing students towards pressuring Administration to back down.

Perhaps the most clear-cut example of this 'crisis-mongering', was the announcement in 1969, that the University Council would be holding its regular monthly meeting off-campus, for fear of student disruption. This was featured widely on TV and in the Press, and no doubt would have impressed the public with the seriousness of the situation. However it did not cut much ice with students who knew, not only that there had been no threat to disrupt the meeting, that the previous Council meeting which had occurred during a campaign against Administration had not been disrupted, that the meeting was being held during the

vacation when there were no students around to do any disrupting anyway!

This suggestion in 1969 that the Council could not meet on its own campus came at a time when there were calls for the State Government to 'intervene' at Monash to 'restore order'. Dr. Matheson made frequent use of this with appeals to students not to cause trouble because the unfavourable publicity could result in outside intervention and/or lower the reputation of Monash degrees. The revelation that Administration was deliberately promoting such publicity with a view to preparing public opinion for the possibility of intervention rather undermined the effectiveness of this tactic and very greatly increased the 'credibility gap' between them and the students. A similar situation arose on the question of the value of Monash degrees, students did not fail to notice that it was the good Doctor himself who was responsible for public statements that their reputation was lowered by student protests.

Denials by the Labor Club have never completely removed the stigma of Administration's repeated assertions that their main aim is to close down the University. The Labor Club insists that its aim is to open it up, and that throughout the world it has always been the authorities, rather than the students, who have sought to close down Universities as a way of intimidating student protest. However Administration's own actions in raising the suggestion that the University may have to be closed and manufacturing publicity in support of that suggestion, have done more than the left ever could to counteract this claim.

Related to the Administration's opportunism is what could be called its 'triviality'—a determination to avoid larger issues by concentrating on smaller ones. A classic example is the statement which Dr. Matheson sent around to all staff

members in the University and to M.A.S. on the eve of a threatened blockade of the University offices. It dealt with the potential fire hazard created by large congregations of students in the exits from the building.

If things run true to form, Administration's reply to this book will consist of a list of petty quibbles about particular points which will be described as 'lies'. They will make no attempt to come to grips with the basic issues involved, and will avoid taking part in a public debate on the subject matter of the book.

The claim that Administration is consciously trying to limit freedom on campus sounds extreme, but is it? Here is an excerpt from Dr. Matheson's 1972 report to State Parliament. He said that the long term aim of the radicals was not 'pretty apparent', and,

'The dispute over the Discipline Statute, and the earlier argument about the admission of and readmission of students with some sort of a record have the object of making this University—and others—safe bases for political activity.'

Right through 1968 and 1969, Dr. Matheson and the Deans were consistently assuring students and staff that there were 'no political implications' whatsoever in the draft Discipline Statute and admissions regulations. The allegation that the exclusions of students with records could be directed at radicals was indignantly dismissed as vicious left-wing distortion of the university's high and noble motives (namely the protection of University members from rapists and arsonists). Many students and staff members were actually taken in by this, but they opposed Administration because they- thought the justification for off-campus discipline and admissions regulations that were

put forward by Administration were unconvincing, and that these measures were therefore unnecessary.

What Dr. Matheson has said in Parliament, is that he *objects* to the University being a 'safe base for political activity', it contradicts every principle which the ruling class pretends that its Universities stand for. It says in effect that Dr. Matheson's aim was to make Monash University an *unsafe place in which to engage in political activity*. In other words the Discipline Statute and admissions regulations were aimed at making Monash unsafe 'for political activity', they were political and Administration was lying when it earlier denied this. Why should a University Vice-Chancellor commit himself to opposing the Universities being 'safe bases for political activity'. To understand this one must examine what sort of political activity students have been engaged in and what political views the University authorities are committed to upholding. Perhaps the best statement of this is again provided by Dr. Matheson himself:

It is of course obvious that the capacity of the United States, in its struggle with Russia and/or China, is being weakened not only at home, but because of similar student action abroad. In Turkey for instance the United States Ambassador was harassed recently and the government is under some pressure to get rid of American military installations. These disturbances are therefore just as effective from a communist point of view as if they had been deliberately stimulated'.  
(Report to Monash Council on Study Leave spent in the U.S. 14th July, 1969.)

Of course Dr. Matheson concedes that student protests 'have every appearance of spontaneity' but there is something very revealing about the way he views the conflict.

It shows that far from being the 'wishy-washy liberal' that he has been occasionally portrayed, the Vice-Chancellor of Monash University is in fact a determined anti-communist conservative. His earlier statements about Whitlam, Santamaria and the Minister of the Army representing 'virtually all points of view' on Vietnam, reveals the same outlook. This outlook is not that of a man concerned about the 'disruption of a centre of learning'. It is the outlook of a man concerned that 'the capacity of the United States, in its struggle with Russia and/or China, *is* being weakened . . .'

Dr. Matheson is correct in his estimate of the situation; the capacity of the United States in its efforts to dominate the world is being weakened. Since his report in 1969, it has been weakened still further, and students have played no small part in that. Of course the main force in defeating U.S. imperialism has been the national liberation struggles of Asia, Africa and Latin America, but American students in particular have played a substantial role also (the spectacular upsurge over the invasion of Cambodia is well known): In countries such as Turkey students have, as Dr. Matheson points out, struggled vigorously against Yankee domination and the use of their country as aggressive war bases. Why should Dr. Matheson be worried about events in Turkey, if he doesn't himself identify with the global aims of U.S. imperialism? In Japan, students have initiated the struggle against the revival of Japanese militarism, a militarism which could once again threaten Australia.

Dr. Matheson is correct in fearing that exactly the same movement is developing in Australia, and that students are playing an increasing part in it. The 1970 occupation of the Careers and Appointments Office in protest against U.S. war profiteers was an anti-imperialist action. So was the tremendous involvement of Monash and other students in Moratorium activities and the anti-racist movement. It is true

that these struggles are still at a comparatively low level compared with those overseas, but they are, nevertheless, happening. Students alone cannot play a decisive role in the struggle, but more and more students are beginning to recognize the need for unity with the working class and for acceptance of the leading role of the working class in revolutionary socialist (not 'student power') struggle. Dr. Matheson is right to be worried.

But he is not right in his consistent refusal to publicly state the issues as fairly and squarely as he does in the Study Leave Report and the report to State Parliament.

## **MONASH TO-DAY**

The fact remains that, in spite of all the efforts of the University authorities, Monash to-day *is* a safe base for political activity. What does being a 'safe base for political activity' mean precisely? It means that Monash students now can freely agitate and organize in support of any political movement whatsoever without fear of internal disciplinary action (the ban on aid to the N.L.F. is still technically in existence, but it is unenforceable). It means that M.A.S. can contribute its funds and facilities to supporting the Moratorium and anti-racist and anti-conscription struggles. Administration is able to use its power over all University finance to prevent direct financial grants going to 'non-University bodies', but it does not dare stop the considerable quantity of propaganda that is produced from Monash in support of radical activities, or the use of Union facilities as an organizing base for protest demonstrations.

Further, the issue of the Discipline Statute has reached a stalemate. Administration has not been able to introduce the clauses it wants and it is still saddled with the old one. This

is so broad that Administration technically has the power to do anything it likes, but it knows perfectly well it would have to call in the police and smash M.A.S. to do it. (As a matter of interest, an M.A.S. meeting in 1970 accepted, against Labor Club wishes, the twelfth draft of the Discipline Statute, with the reservations that there should be open hearings, and staff representatives on the Discipline Committee should be elected by the staff themselves. Administration promptly withdrew it and went away to write another five new drafts, each one worse than the last. M.A.S. was finally presented with a seventeenth draft in 1970 which, among other things, provided that 'if necessary' Administration could set up a Discipline Committee of any five people in Australia and use it to expel students. Naturally this was rejected and Administration has not been game enough to submit subsequent drafts to the students for fear of a reaction.) On the other hand it means that students can deny the use of University facilities to reactionary organizations like the Australian Army and the U.S. and drive President Nixon's 'Special Advisor on Youth' off the campus in 1971, without Administration being able to do very much about it.

Students have been elected to the Public Affairs Council on 'Communist' tickets, and have openly admitted they are communists at M.A.S. general meetings, without raising a murmur of surprise. If Monash students had not fought the University authorities, they would not have hesitated to openly introduce regulations excluding students with political records. This was done at Melbourne University, with its relatively quiescent student population (until recently), and a number of former Monash and La Trobe students were actually excluded. Similar moves at La Trobe were defeated by students in 1971, in the same way as at Monash — by mass struggle.



So much has Monash become a safe base, and student political action become a threat, that extreme right-wing groups outside the University have taken the role of attempting to crush student radicals. The attack on students is now headed by the D.L.P. and its guiding hand, the National Civic Council (N.C.C.). The N.C.C. plan was outlined in the May, 1971 edition of Catholic Worker, which described a paper presented at a conference of the N.C.C. Extension Committee advocating the setting-up of small (10-15 members) 'Peace with Freedom' groups on campus, each with an adult staff counterpart and representative on the University Councils to put pressure on Vice-Chancellors, Dependent upon the N.C.C. for support, these groups would endeavour to isolate and discredit members of the left.

## **REBELLION TO REVOLUTION**

So the cycle continues. Students are repressed, and rebel again. Increasing numbers are becoming radicalized by this process, which continues because of the fundamental contradictions in Australian capitalist society. Many students now simply do not want to serve capitalism, a system whose economic base is exploitation, whose driving force is aggression (politely called 'competition'), whose social manifestation is alienation, and whose international structure is imperialism. The exploitation of workers, coloured races, women and students exists because the ruling class must exploit in order to survive as rulers. As the chains of oppression become clear for each group, the struggles for liberation become broader and the awareness of the need for a socialist society emerges. But the capitalist State which relies for its existence on servile workers, passive women, obedient students and teachers who will perpetuate the authoritarian class hierarchy of society, crushes ruthlessly any opposition to it, and these groups must unite and resist this resolutely. The oppressed will only

be liberated when the oppressors are overthrown — by revolution. The fight for revolution will be hard, it will be long, but it will be successful. The struggle of the students at Monash University is part of that fight.

# **GLOSSARY OF TERMS, CLICHES, SLOGANS, ETC.**

## **Academic Freedom:**

Cliche used to mean 'freedom for Academics'; the others don't count!

## **Admin (The Administration):**

Refers to 'those senior members of the University community', such as the Vice-Chancellor, the Academic Registrar, the seven Deans, the Professorial Board and their various colleagues, cohorts, and lackeys who run Monash using power derived directly from the University Act and the State Government. It does not refer to ordinary administrative or academic staff who merely work for Admin. The term is used as shorthand by students when referring to decisions that may be officially made by Council, the Professorial Board, a sub-committee, an ad hoc special committee, a faculty, a department of practically any other 'front' Admin can think up, but which carries those characteristics and 'authority' that mark it out as emanating from the inner circle.

## **Administration Building:**

(a) The University Offices were called the 'Administration Building' until the end of 1967 when the name was changed. The original name, however, has stuck;

(b) also named 'Bullshit Castle' by the late Prof. Jock Marshall;

(c) also commonly known as the 'Fortress' during 1970 when it was sealed off from the rest of the University by guards, special locks, double doors and identity checks.

#### A.E. (The Administrative Executive of M.A.S.):

An administrative committee of seven elected students whose role is to carry out decisions of General Meetings of students, and to publicize and call General Meetings of students. It consists of a chairman, secretary, treasurer, public relations officer, Australian Union of Students secretary and two members without portfolio. The A.E. is not supposed to have any representation role or power to make policy decisions.

#### Community of Scholars:

Current usage aptly defined by Prof. Street, Chairman of Dept. of Physics as a place where 'the staff have a right to teach, and the students have a right to learn'.

#### C.O.R. (Committee of Representatives:

A loose M.A.S. committee of all the student representatives on University Committees, such as the Catering committee, and Car-parking committee. It meets about once a term.

#### D.L.P. Club:

It sometimes calls itself the Monash Democrats, or Democratic Labor Club and adheres to the general line of the extra university extreme right-wing National Civic Council, run by Santamaria. This very small group

manages to make a very loud noise. It publishes 'Free Speech' on a black and white letter-head identical in design to 'Liberty' at La Trobe, 'Radical' at Melbourne, and 'Democrat' at Sydney as well as various other dishonestly named rags at campuses around Australia, which carry nationally syndicated lies on events at other Universities and which are published with the same style, the same politics. It is quite fascinating that the main thesis of this group is that the left is manipulated from outside!

#### Discipline Statute:

(a) In a free and democratic institution like a university there is a mutual atmosphere of respect between all members of the 'community of scholars'. Of course this does not apply to students and they are 'kept in line' by a Discipline Statute. At present any action deemed to be 'Misconduct' by the Deans who comprise the Discipline Committee is punishable by fines, exclusion or both.

(b) A statute whereby students, professors and staff alike are forbidden to occupy buildings, or disobey reasonable orders of professors or other members of staff.

#### Duress:

When Admin is forced to change its actions by the University Community.

Intimidation: Carrying resolutions beginning with 'we demand'.

'I will not negotiate under duress':

Students: 'Re-instate the expelled students.'

Matheson: 'Leave the building.'

Students: 'Re-instate the expelled students.'

Matheson: 'Leave the building.'

Students then leave the building.

Students: 'Will you re-instate the expelled students?'

Matheson: 'No.'

liberal (Note the small '1'):

A common political individual found on campus whose position is well defined by American folk-singer Phil Ochs to be: 'Someone ten degrees to the left of centre in good times and ten degrees to the right of centre when it affects him personally'.

Limits of Protest:

The point beyond which protest becomes effective.

M.A.S. (Monash Association of Students):

An organization which has served the students since mid 1968. The controlling body of M.A.S. is the General Meeting of Students which is open to all students at Monash. A General Meeting may be called by a petition of 2% of the students or by one of the M.A.S. committees, and must have a quorum of 5% of students or 6% for a special meeting (with less than seven days' notice). The committees that serve the M.A.S. General Meetings are A.E., P.A.C., and C.O.R.

Moderate:

A right-winger who moderates his views in order to gain credence. When speaking at M.A.S. meetings he will support a principle that he opposes in order to later oppose the action over that principle.

Monash Labor Club (now Worker Student Alliance — W.S.A.):

A band of anarchistic agitators (*Herald*), communistic in their sympathies, many alien in their origins, depriving good Australians of their rightful place in University ('Gippsland Times'). This group of long-haired, uncouth, unwashed, uncultured rat-bags' (State Parliament) forms the local cell of the International - Bolshevik - Zionist - Fluoridationist - Conspiracy, dedicated to fighting against Truth, Justice and the American Way.

Neutral University:

Where left-wing views are neutralized.

New Left (at Monash):

Students who in the face of a blatantly repressive act by Admin sit in the coffee lounge during an M.A.S. meeting lamenting the crazy tactics of the Labor Club 'adventurists' outside and deploring their lack of intellectuality. They are sometimes lured out of the coffee lounge when they notice that the coffee lounge is otherwise empty because everyone else in the University is outside supporting the 'crazy tactics'. They have consistently failed to provide a left alternative to the Labor Club.

Ordinary Decent Student:

It is written in the Monash Statutes, handed down to us by our forefathers and their forefathers, that on an

appointed day, the Ordinary Decent Students will phoenix-like rise up and, surmounting all obstacles. under the leadership of a revived S.R.C., drive out the evil triffids which have sprung up all round us and their fire-breathing M.A.S. majority, and restore the Monash Campus to a pinnacle of civilisation and a place of reasoned discourse, peace, calm and sterility. Legend hath it that if the Ordinary Decent Students are summoned without due rites and rituals, and the triffids get amongst them, then they will turn chameleon-like into left-wing ratbags.

P.A.C. (The Public Affairs Committee):

A representative body of fifteen students directly elected on political platforms. The role of P.A.C. is to put issues before M.A.S. meetings which then form M.A.S. policy. P.A.C. then publicizes the policy and organizes action to gain acceptance for it.

Professor:

A god-like figure who, because of his enormous responsibilities in running the department, cannot be subjected to popular vote. In other words, his responsibilities preclude him from being responsible to the staff and students who are affected by his decisions.

Professorial Board:

Where the professors discuss their latest overseas trips, matters of academic policy, and how to best ignore students.

Proper Channel:



(a) 'Students have the right to dissent but not to choose the means of dissent.' (Professor Manton's summing up of the crisis at the end of 1970.)

(b) One through which Admin can escape when necessary.

#### Proper Procedure:

See the Assistant Comptroller and then see the Comptroller who will refer you to the Traffic Committee. Then see the V.C., who will say it is a matter for the P.B. They will forward the notice to Council. They will tell you to see the Assistant Comptroller. Then take direct action.

#### Print:

An unscrupulous Labor Club broadsheet that from time reveals information that Admin wanted to keep under the carpet. (See `Sound').

#### Reasoned Discourse:

We intend to ignore what you say but we will defend unto death your right to say it . . . We will even go so far as to alter the wording of our proposals if you convince us that your wording will more efficiently implement our ideas.

#### Reasonable Order:

Any order made for the purpose of subsequent disciplinary procedures.

#### Referendum:

(a) M.A.S.: Device used by the right-wing for delay-ing a decision by a M.A.S. General Meeting and hopefully defeating it by getting students who have not heard debate on the issue to vote against the decision.

(b) Admin: A brilliant strategic innovation hit on by Dr. Matheson in 1970 to gain a few days time and lose all credibility.

#### Scholarship:

(a) Device to help under-privileged middle class Public School boys to university.

(b) The term was overheard in a discussion between a student and a Vice-Chancellor (V.C.). Student: 'The working class children can't get to university.'

V.C.: 'Let them win scholarships.'

#### S.N.C. (Student Negotiating Committee):

Committee of students set up by a Student General Meeting to negotiate ad nauseum with Admin over the Discipline Statute.

#### Sound:

An unscrupulous Admin broadsheet that from time to time reveals information that Admin should want to keep under the carpet. (See *Print*).

#### S.R.C. (The Students Representative Council):

Until mid-1968, students managed their affairs through a supposedly 'representative' council of twenty-eight students, some of whom were elected at faculty

elections and some of whom were elected at general elections. The S.R.C. built up an enormously complicated and unwieldy system of committees and executives; the main two being the 'Resident Executive' and the 'General Executive'.

#### Student Money:

The University collects a Union fee from all students at the beginning of the year. This is used to finance the running of the Union, the clubs and M.A.S. However, students do not control this money.

#### Triffids:

A term used by Dr. Matheson to describe those (radical) students who refuse to accept their presented role as vegetables, providing a yield of 'high-grade oil' for their masters. Student rebellion is, for him, a 'nightmare'.

"To make a series of visits to Universities in different parts of the world in 1969 is to undertake a journey which has some of the nightmare qualities of science fiction: the truffids are springing up every-where and no-one knows how to keep them in check, still less how to cut them down. But this is not a nightmare, alas, from which one can awaken into the clear morning of a sane and orderly world. Every-where the harsh reality is of Universities under attack, in chaos, closed, or open only when under police protection. Everywhere the reality is of student rebel-lion, sometimes violent, sometimes encouraged or even stimulated by a minority of academics, not infrequently aggravated by real deficiencies in the system. " J. A. L. Matheson, July, 1969.

"The truffids are grotesque and dangerous plants, over seven feet tall, originally cultivated for their yield of

high-grade oil. So long as conditions give the mastery to their human directors, they are a valuable asset to mankind. But when a sudden universal disaster turns those conditions upside down, then the triffids, seizing their opportunity, become an active and dreadful menace." John Wyndham, *The Day of the Triffids*.

#### University Council:

The controlling body of the University, consisting mainly of 'highly influential and highly competent industrialists and businessmen' as specific representatives of industrial, agricultural and commercial interests, and Parliament. co-opted members, or elected by the faculties. Reactionary, out of touch with University affairs, this 'lay' body is supposed to represent the wide range of community interests. In fact it represents the capitalist ruling class. Only two students and one member of the non-professorial teaching staff are on Council.

#### Unrepresentative of Student opinion:

(a) If S.R.C. in existence, 'unrepresentative' is used to mean 'not the opinion of the majority of students at a General meeting'.

(b) If M.A.S. in existence, Admin uses the term to mean 'not the opinion of a representative elected group'.

#### Violence:

The failure to continue endlessly with reasoned discourse, as above; often qualified by 'brute' or 'mindless', and includes sitting, standing, walking and sometimes all three.

Voetsak:

An Afrikaan word meaning (less politely) 'go away'. The Springboks were frequently greeted with this cry during their Australian 'tour'.

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